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Disarmament Commission
343rd meeting
Monday, 19 January 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Drobnjak ..... (Croatia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair: I declare open the 2015 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

Draft provisional agenda for the 2015 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/L.73)

The Chair: As in past years, the Commission has convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of the Chair and of other members of the Bureau for 2015.

I wish now to draw the Commission's attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.73. If I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.73.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of the Chair

The Chair: In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of African States that has the honour to nominate the candidate for the post of the Chair of the Commission at its 2015 session. I have received an official communication from the Chair of that Group informing me that the Group has endorsed the candidature of Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal for the chairmanship of the Commission for its 2015 session.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Ambassador Fodé Seck as the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, I congratulate Ambassador Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, on his election to this high office. I express the commonly shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from his wide experience and diplomatic skills. We wish him success in discharging his new and important duties. For our part, we will remain at his service, ready to provide support and counsel, as necessary.

Finally, as outgoing Chair, I would like to warmly thank all those who assisted me in 2014, particularly the Secretariat, the members of the Bureau and my hardworking team in the Croatian mission. It has been a rewarding experience.

With those brief remarks, I invite Ambassador Fodé Seck to take the Chair.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) took the Chair.

Statement by the Chair

The Chair (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for electing me Chair of the Commission and entrusting me with the important task of chairing this organizational session, as well as for the kind words and wishes addressed to me. I count on

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the support and cooperation of all Member States in achieving the important goals ahead of the Commission.

Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I would first like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak for the excellent guidance and leadership he provided as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2014 substantive session. My gratitude also goes to other members of the Bureau for their valiant and tireless efforts. Finally, I would like to thank delegations for the constructive spirit and cooperation they demonstrated during the previous session of the Commission.

Election of other officers

The Chair (*spoke in French*): Like the Chair, the other officers of the Bureau are elected on a basis of the established principle of geographic rotation. Accordingly, it is the turn of the Group of Eastern European States to nominate a candidate for Rapporteur of the Commission for the 2015 substantive session and one Vice-Chair.

I would suggest that we proceed to the election of the Vice-Chair. In that regard, I have been informed that the consultations are still ongoing within regional groups on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. We will therefore address the issue at a later stage.

Review of the draft resolution submitted to the First Committee at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission

The Chair (*spoke in French*): As members of the Commission are aware, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that has specific bearing on the work of the Commission. In the interest of clarity and for the information of the members of the Commission, I would like to briefly revisit this resolution. Resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission" was adopted at the Assembly's 62nd plenary meeting, on 2 December 2014, under agenda item 98 (b). The relevant paragraphs of the resolution, namely, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, read as follows:

> "Recommends that the Disarmament Commission intensify consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492, before the start of its substantive session of 2015, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item;
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> "Encourages the Disarmament Commission to invite, as appropriate, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to prepare background papers on the items on its agenda and, if need be, other disarmament experts to present their views, as provided for in paragraph 3 (e) of resolution 61/98, upon the invitation of the Chair and with the prior approval of the Commission;
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> "Requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2015, namely from 6 to 24 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, and stresses that the report of the Commission should contain a summary by the Chair of the proceedings to reflect different views or positions if no agreement can be reached on the specific agenda item deliberated on, as provided for in paragraph 3.4 of the adopted 'Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission'".

I have just outlined the resolution containing the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission.

I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or comments.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, and his dedicated team for their tireless efforts during the previous session of the Commission. We congratulate the newly elected Chair, Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, designated by the Group of African States. We would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Chair, of our full support. We look forward to working closely with you and firmly believe that under your leadership the Commission's work will progress.

We have always recognized the important role the Disarmament Commission was designed to play as the main subsidiary body of the United Nations on disarmament matters when it was established at the Organization's first special session devoted to disarmament. The Commission has played an important role in the past, adopting a number of guidelines and recommendations. Regrettably, that was a long time ago. Since 1999, the Commission has been unable to properly comply with its mandate and has failed to agree on any recommendations to be made to the General Assembly. Since this session of the Commission marks the beginning of a new three-year cycle, we sincerely hope that it will grasp the opportunity to agree on a more focused agenda. In our view, that could create room for consensus recommendations and enable the Disarmament Commission to once again assume its designated role.

In that context, we welcome Assembly resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which recommends that the Commission intensify its consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda, in accordance with Assembly decision 52/492, before the start of its 2015 substantive session, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item.

We believe that the option of expanding the agenda should be further explored. An additional agenda item could create favourable conditions for overcoming the existing deadlock caused by artificial linkages between the results of proceedings in two Working Groups, as seen during the previous three-year cycle. It would also enable the Disarmament Commission to discuss new developments and challenges for international security and multilateral disarmament.

In that regard, we would like to endorse the proposal by the United States to establish a working group on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, as recommended for the Commission's consideration by the Group of Governmental Experts in its consensus report (A/68/189).

While noting that, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 69/77, the General Assembly requested the Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2015, namely from 6 to 24 April, we continue to believe that serious consideration should be given to the possibility of reducing the duration of the UNDC's substantive sessions, in particular in the first year of the triennial cycle. We would encourage the Chair to undertake an effort to complete the 2015 substantive session as early as possible.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we wish you every success in your work. We are looking forward to working with the other delegations to make the new three-year cycle of the UNDC a productive one.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): First of all, Mr. Chair, I would like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Croatia, and his team for all the efforts they made and the manner in which they led the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) during the previous session until today. We would like also to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, and assure you of our full and active support.

For the first time, General Assembly resolution 69/77, on the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission, contains a paragraph stressing the importance of the UNDC adopting an agenda that provides for focused deliberations, among other measures that have not been set forth in the analogous resolution for quite some time.

We believe that consultations on the agenda should start at the earliest possible opportunity. Sir, I am sure that your predecessor has already informed you of the ideas contained in his report to the First Committee in which the proposals made in the consultations that preceded the work of the First Committee at its most recent session were summarized. Based on those ideas, I think we could reach an agreement at an early date. It is in our interest to do so because we do not want toopen this session without an agreement on the agenda. From past experience, we know that we have wasted precious time in trying to agree on the agenda for the Commission during the session itself. We must be particularly careful this time because we are negotiating the agenda for an entire three-year cycle.

We think that we have to be flexible in approaching this issue. We do not have to make major changes to the Commission's agenda. As we have proposed in the past, the Commission can keep the agenda as it is while remaining consistent with resolution 69/77, which provides for focused deliberations, which can be done by agreeing on sub-agenda items. We would table our previous proposal on reaching an agreement on sub-items that would fall under agenda item 1 on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Under that

agenda item, we could agree on sub-items either for a whole cycle or for more than one cycle. We could reach an agreement for one cycle and then have a gentleman's agreement for a period that goes beyond that first cycle. I believe that is approach could facilitate our finding agreement on an agenda.

We listened carefully to the statement made the representative of Latvia, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, and we find the proposal for a third agenda item very interesting. However, we need to separate two issues: first, an agreement on an additional agenda item, and, secondly, the number of working groups to be established. I hope we will not link the proposal of a new agenda item with the establishment of a new working group. We are not sure it is a good idea to have three working groups during one session. I do not think we can afford to have three groups working at the same time during the same session.

We are flexible when it comes to the new agenda item, but the question of how to handle the three agenda items during one session should be left to further consultations. I do not think we need to have three working groups. We can discuss this further at a later stage.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you upon your election. You have all of our support, Sir, and we are confident that we will achieve tangible results under your chairmanship. I would also like to express our thanks to the representative of Croatia for the diligence and skill with which he guided the session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and, in particular, the negotiations that were held during the meetings of the First Committee this year.

We will of course leave it to our colleague, the representative of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to express the formal opinion of NAM, but, given the ideas that you mentioned, Sir, as well as those of the representatives of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), and of Morocco, I would just like to share a few of our general impressions on how we could promote the achievement of concrete results for the UNDC.

We are very open to all the proposals and ideas that have been shared, including the idea of establishing a third working group. But it is very difficult to take a position on something for which we have no specific details. For us, in principle, the starting point should always be disarmament. In other words, disarmament should always be the clearest and most concrete aspect, whether or not we establish a third working group.

The choice of subject for a third working group, if we decide to move in that direction, should have as its focus the disarmament aspect. We are very open to hearing your ideas, Mr. Chair, as well as those of our colleagues. I believe the representative of Croatia has already circulated some relevant ideas. We have even held interactive and pointed consultations during which my delegation, at least, addressed several subjects, the starting point of which was always the disarmament aspect of the subject being discussed. It has not always been the case that the subject under discussion had a clear disarmament aspect, but we hope that, under your leadership and chairmanship of the UNDC, Mr. Chair, it will, especially because this is, after all, the Disarmament Commission.

I would also like to endorse what my European Union and Moroccan colleagues said — the sooner we begin, the easier it will be. The official work of the Commission begins in April, but if we start now with informal consultations under your chairmanship, Sir, that would help us begin the actual work in April, instead of having to start with discussions on what the agenda will be and whether there will be two or three or more working groups. The earlier we begin — as we did in other processes, in particular the discussion on small arms and light weapons, which began a year in advance, which is why we had enough time to deal with the thematic and substantive aspects during the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — the better. Perhaps that approach could also work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We have full confidence in you, Mr. Chair, and we offer you our full support. We hope that we will have the opportunity to achieve concrete results in this forum. I would also like to thank the Secretariat, which has always done its utmost to support this process. I congratulate you once again, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for convening these informal consultations. First of all, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It is indeed a challenging position, which requires the Chair to steer us through

the work of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing Chair, the Ambassador of Croatia, for the tireless efforts with which he tried to lead us to an outcome in the last session.

I think that taking up new issues at this time at the United Nations Disarmament Commission would be very challenging. I believe that we were very close to reaching consensus at least on the confidence-building measures issue in the working group on that topic in our last session. We were very close. We had some way to go perhaps on nuclear-disarmament issues in the working group dedicated to that topic. I just do not know how we are going to accommodate a third working group, as our colleagues from Morocco and Egypt so eloquently stated. As they have stated, while we are open to the creation of a working group on any other matter, I do not know how we are going to do so in the present climate. Having spent 15 years not reaching any agreement on anything in the Commission, it might be a little difficult.

In the context of creating a third working group, the European Union's view that we should have a shorter first session is not clear to me. I do not know how we are going to adequately cover a new topic and consider it carefully if we are going to truncate the first session. I am open to any practical suggestions as to how that might be done.

As Egypt has so eloquently said, we are open to starting informal consultations on the various agenda items, whether there be two or three, and we are open to doing so as soon as possible.

The foregoing are just my informal views. Obviously, the Non-Aligned Movement will express its more formal views to the Commission once they have been formulated.

Mr. Volgarev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and we look forward to cooperating with you to productive ends.

Russia calls for an intensification of the Commission's work as an important element in the United Nations disarmament machinery triad. In the future, we will continue to support the forum as much as possible so it will be able to fulfil the functions mandated to it at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, helping to reach agreements in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

We would like to guard against any initiatives aimed at adjusting this forum's rules of procedure, including linking it to the process of establishing the agenda. We believe that the principle of consensus must always be at the heart of any consideration of issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Commission has good experience in this work and is fully capable of delivering quality product without changing the existing rules of procedure. The problem is not the rules of procedure, but the difficulty of mobilizing the political will of States to carry out effective work.

Considering the insufficience of information on States' approaches in the annual resolution on the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we believe it advisable to underscore the importance of having States and the Commission's secretariat itself provide detailed proposals on the agenda. We therefore earnestly call upon the secretariat to prepare, at the end of today's meeting, a consolidated document containing all the proposals that have come in. We would ask that such a document be distributed to delegations so that it may be considered promptly by the capitals whose responses would then transmitted to the secretariat within an acceptable time frame, perhaps by 16 February. The Commission's main session deadline allows for final consideration of the consolidated proposals of States, but we would suggest conducting one more organizational meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

For our part, we would like to propose that the topics of prevention of an arms race in outer space and of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space be included in the agenda of the upcoming session. A positive outcome could be facilitated the fact that the corresponding documents of the General Assembly, namely, resolution 69/31, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, resolution 69/38, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and resolution 68/243, adopted in 2013, which takes note of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (A/68/98), were adopted by consensus. In our view, this thematic consolidation could help us improve the work of the forum and, more generally, bring it out of its impasse.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank our former Chair, Ambassador Drobnjak, for his accomplishments at the helm of United Nations Disarmament Commission. We highly appreciate the results he achieved, as well as his thorough and business-like approach to his work.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I would take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, at least informally, on behalf of the African Group on your nomination, election and assumption of the position of Chair. We would assure you, Sir, of our commitment to working with you in a productive manner, and we also thank your predecessor for all his efforts.

Speaking in my national capacity, I would state that my delegation is open to proposals that will ensure that the discussions and deliberations in the months to come are unfettered. Since this is a new three-year cycle, we should also be careful not to introduce elements that might become sources of encumbrance.

The representative of South Africa just highlighted the fact that we almost reached consensus last year. And that is exactly the problem: we keep saying that every year. I recall that, during the 2011 substantive session, we also almost reached consensus in Working Group II. I still vividly recall what happened the evening consensus was almost reached. We made an appeal to everyone, including the sound engineers and the interpreters, to stay. I remember what our colleague from Iran said that day, which was quite useful. He assured the Chair of his support and said that his wife had previously called to tell him not to come home if we did not reach consensus that day. Our colleague from Portugal joined the fray, saying that, while he did not have a wife, we still had to reach consensus that day. But, sadly, we were not able to do so.

That is why we have to be careful about what we are doing. We want the period from 6 to 24 April 2015 to be meaningful, and the proposals from our colleagues from Morocco and Egypt are of course sound. Let us start on time. I do not believe that we should introduce new elements, because if we do that, as long as the reasons that the Working Groups have been failing until now remain unresolved, we risk getting muddled up again.

However, we believe the windows are now closing, so we would not foreclose any possibilities, including the new proposals. All that we ask of our colleagues is to ensure that we all come to the table with an equitable mindset and clean hands. In that way, at the end of the day, we will be able to live happily with the results.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation for the dedicated efforts made by the outgoing Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to move forward the work of the Commission and prepare the draft resolution adopted by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the First Committee (resolution 69/77). I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the new Chair of the Commission and wish you success in this endeavour. My delegation is ready to support your work, Sir, and we can assure you of our full support in that regard. Given the developments at this stage, the Commission is, as pointed out by our colleagues, ready to begin consultations on determining the agenda items for the next session as soon as possible.

The representative of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, made some important points, including a specific proposal with regard to the Commission's agenda. At this stage, we will convey that proposal to our capital and await instructions. However, as far as our position is concerned, we have already expressed our reservations and doubt about having a third agenda item. We do not think that the inclusion of a third agenda item will be fruitful because it would likely overload the Commission's agenda. We therefore urge caution in dealing with this issue. As is clear from resolution 69/77, it is the view of only a few countries — certainly there is no consensus on the idea — to add a third item to the agenda.

At the same time, our colleague from Morocco rightly pointed to a provision of resolution 69/77 on the need to have focused discussions in the Commission's next cycle. We think that this provision is important and that it is worthy of serious consideration. We would also like to express our support for the proposal made by our colleague from Russia to ask the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive list of current or previous proposals for inclusion in the agenda of the Commission.

Mr. Ried (United States of America): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election today. You can certainly depend on the full support of my delegation, Sir, as you take up the responsibilities of your new Office.

I will limit my remarks to the proposal to establish a third working group. As we noted in our

opening statement to the Commission last April (see A/CN.10/PV.337), the United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. Resolution 68/50, of 2013, refers to recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities to the Commission (A/68/189) for its consideration. The Group's recommendations are, in our view, an ideal topic for in-depth consideration at future sessions of the Commission. Therefore, we would be very supportive of a proposal for the establishment of a third working group.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for chairing the meeting today. The Chinese delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important body, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and will cooperate fully with you. Meanwhile, we would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, the representative of Croatia, for the important contributions he has made to the Commission. I would like to make four points.

First, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has made some valuable accomplishments in the past. The international community should continue to build on and strengthen the Commission's contributions and revitalize its work so as to make further contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, in the working cycle starting this year, discussions with a view to reaching an agreement on the agenda will be very important. China is open to considering whether we should continue the existing approach to the discussions, namely, addressing both nuclear and conventional issues.

Thirdly, in order to keep up with current developments in peace, security and disarmament, China would also suggest that we select a number of new issues from the proposed list for inclusion in the Commission's agenda. China has already proposed the following topics to the other members of the Commission.

(*spoke in English*)

The topics could be, first, factors affecting global strategic stability; secondly, guiding principles for the maintenance of international information and cybersecurity; thirdly, guiding principles for the prevention of an arms race in outer space; fourthly, ways to enhance the balance between supply and demand of sensitive nuclear materials; fifthly, the challenges to biological and chemical weapons verification against the backdrop of the integration of biology and chemistry; and, sixthly, the influence of new developments in the military field on conventional disarmament. The foregoing are the agenda items that China put forward last year, as requested by the Croatian Chair in his call for revitalizing the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

(*spoke in Chinese*)

My fourth point is that China continues to believe that, by adhering to the principle of consensus, the Commission will be able to start negotiations and discussions as soon as possible and reach agreement in order to lay a good foundation for our work this year.

Mrs. Del Sol Dominguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and wish you every success in your work. We would also like to express our recognition of the work done by the outgoing Chair, the representative of Croatia.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to say that we support the idea of starting our work as soon as possible in order to reach agreement on the items on our agenda. We are concerned in particular about the possibility of adding a third agenda item, and we share that concern with other colleagues for reasons of time alone. In other words, we believe that, given the time dedicated to the work of the Commission and the two Working Groups, a third group would detract from the goal of reaching the consensus that we all hope for in the work of the Commission. That is why we are also concerned about the proposal to decrease the amount of time allotted to the work of the Commission. We support the idea of keeping the agenda focused on disarmament issues, especially nuclear disarmament, and we would reiterate my delegation's support for your work, Sir, and for the Commission's success.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): My delegation would also like to associate itself with others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Commission at this session. We would express our appreciation to Croatia for ably the leading the proceedings during the last session. I would like to highlight a couple of points.

Much has already been said, and it is obvious to us that what is happening in the Commission is not something that our delegation — or many others — takes

pride in. There is a lot of frustration, but we want to suggest that the inaction of the past 15 years or so within the Commission is not entirely a function of the failure of its working methods. Of course, there is always room for improvement in that regard, but that may not necessarily be the sole reason. There are other reasons, but this is not the time to go into them. We have had these discussions before.

We can support some of the additional proposals in terms of items that have been made by China. We also endorse the process that has been suggested by Russia, namely, to put all the proposals together and then have a look at them. That makes eminent sense because a lot of comments, proposals and suggestions are on the table. It would make great sense to have them on a single piece of paper, on the basis of which we would subsequently have a structured or informal discussion.

Like others, we also have questions and we would be happy to have detailed discussions on any of them. But for the sake of brevity I would mention just one — whether an additional, third agenda item would necessarily involve the structure of an additional working group, as some have mentioned. Or would it be like what we have seen in the Commission's previous practice, namely, having have the two items dealt with in two separate working groups and the third item being dealt with, not in the format of a working group, but in a different and more informal format?

There is also the element of time. Our colleagues from the European Union have indicated that the time frame needs to be curtailed. We are prepared to look at that issue, but how could the idea of a third agenda item be squared with the idea of reducing the time frame, assuming that there are two working groups with a certain amount of time to be allocated to the existing two agenda items in those two working groups. So what is the time frame that we are looking at for the consideration of the third item, with or without establishing a working group?

There are of course other questions, but at this stage, we would just endorse the Russian proposal of culling the ideas on the table into a single document and then looking at them with an open mind, with discussion and more conversation. We certainly look forward to that.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your recent election and to express to you our support as you carry out your work.

Mexico would support any initiative that would make the thematic discussions more flexible and substantive and promote interactivity in the United Nations Disarmament Commission's discussions.

With respect to the possibility of modifying the substantive agenda, my delegation believes that the core problem is more than one of just agenda items, in that the Commission has not been able to make any substantive recommendations in recent years. Mexico would not be opposed to modifying the agenda, as long as we are prioritizing agenda items aimed at implementing the recommendations of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to facilitate the disarmament process and at adopting methods and policies that enhance international peace and security and build confidence among States.

Mr. Abhishek Singh (India): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the post of Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, the Ambassador of Croatia, for his leadership. We look forward to constructively engaging the UNDC on all issues during the informal consultations, including the issue of the consideration of a third agenda item.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We are already fully engaged in informal consultations. The Secretariat shall be requested, pursuant to the requests formulated by a number of delegations, to draw up a compilation of the various proposals. I do not know how long the Secretariat will need to do so, but the faster the better so that, on the basis of that compendium and of the most recent resolution on the Commission (resolution 69/77) and the report of the outgoing Chair, we can rapidly move to making progress in the informal consultations so as to be in a position from 6 to 24 April to make progress at the start of the new cycle of discussions in the Disarmament Commission.

I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Given your request, Sir, that the Secretariat prepare a compilation of the proposals for the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I would like to propose that delegations be given a deadline, perhaps of 31 January 2015, by which to present their proposals to the Secretariat, in the light of our discussions today. This would enable all delegations to consult with their

capitals and political groupings in order to consult among themselves before presenting their proposals to the Secretariat so as to ensure that the list to be prepared will be more effective and efficient.

The Chair: May I take it that the Commission agrees that all such proposals to be included in the compendium to be drawn up by the Secretariat should be submitted to the Secretariat by 31 January 2015?

It was so decided.

The Chair: If there are no further comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the provisional agenda for the 2015 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.74 — with the understanding, of course, that the agenda will be revised accordingly and formally adopted after we reach consensus on items 4 and 5?

It was so decided.

The Chair: It is also my understanding that informal consultations are needed to reach agreement on the substantive items and that the Commission will act accordingly when such an agreement has been reached.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and meets annually. Its sessions are financed from regular budgets and do not require additional funding. Moreover, in accordance with decision 52/492, of 1998, the annual substantive sessions of the Commission should last three weeks. As a result, during the 2015 session the Commission will work on the basis of our usual practice, namely, a full three-week session. With this in mind, the Secretariat has arranged that the dates for the 2015 substantive session would be from 6 to 24 April. The last day of the first week, 10 April, coincides with Orthodox Good Friday, and there will be no meetings on that day. That means that the schedule of the session will be adjusted accordingly. May I take it that the Commission takes note of those arrangements?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I should like to note that, according to established practice, all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, as I have already informed the Commission, we are not in a position to conclude organizational matters in view of the following outstanding vacancies: first, one Vice-Chair from the Group of African States; secondly, two Vice-Chairs from each of the following groups: the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Group of Western European and Other States; and, thirdly, one Vice-Chair and Rapporteur from the Group of Eastern European States.

As the Commission is aware, this is a tall order. I would like to use this opportunity to appeal to the regional groups concerned to conduct all the necessary consultations in order to enable the Commission to start its substantive work as planned, on 6 April, with a full Bureau. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to conclude this organizational session and give the Chair and delegations time to carry on further consultations on those issues and to take decisions at an appropriate time.

If there are no more pressing issues to discuss, I will take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to conclude the 2015 organizational session and to resume the unfinished organizational business at the first meeting of the Disarmament Commission, on 6 April.

It was so decided.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Should I therefore assume that there will be no further informal consultations? I ask because we have heard a number of proposals today, including to shorten the first session and to add additional items. My assumption is that these will be dealt with on the opening day of the United Nations Disarmament Commission session and that there will be no further sessions.

In my view, there are far more issues to be resolved than can be resolved on the opening day of the substantive session. As my colleagues have done, I have sat through a number of organizational sessions, and I would hate to get into a situation where we end up with more unresolved procedural issues on the opening day than issues we actually have agreement on with regard to what we are supposed to be doing and where we are supposed to be going.

Mr. Volgarev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation has already called for the holding of one more organizational meeting for the final consideration of those proposals for additions to the agenda. If for some reason that is not possible, due,

for example, to the cost of holding such a meeting, then we would like to consider alternatives on how to get input in order to reach a common denominator among States. Agreements could be reached through informal consultations, e-mail or similar means.

We agree to reaching an agreement on the pending issues on the first day of the substantive session, as long as there would be a timely circulation by the Secretariat of a substantive document on the issues with an analysis of the proposals that have come in so that we have enough time to study it. However, it would be better to have one more organizational meeting. That would be our preferred option.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I will ask the Secretariat if it is possible, from a practical and logistical standpoint, to hold another organizational meeting, given that between now and the end of January all the parties will have submitted their proposals to the Secretariat and they will be compiled and distributed to everyone with a view to holding informal consultations.

I now call on the representative of Morocco.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): Just to be clear, I do not know whether we really need another organizational meeting, because the purpose of having informal consultations is to try to reach agreement prior to the first meeting of the substantive session, so as to ensure that when we open the session we can easily approve what we would have already agreed to during our informal consultations. We do not oppose having another organizational meeting, but we do not think it is really necessary. I think the same thing happened in the past when we held an organizational meeting without the full membership of the Bureau, and we started the session and got through it easily, especially when it came to the organizational issues.

What I would suggest to the Chair is that, after you, Sir, have received all the proposals, and once they are circulated to all delegations, based on that compilation of proposals you can start your informal consultations with groups and delegations and then you, Sir, may convene informal consultations when you consider that consultations or discussions are ripe enough for another meeting, to try to reach an agreement. From there we can move to the substantive session. I do not think there is a need for another organizational meeting. That is my understanding.

The Chair: Could I ask the representative of South Africa if the summary proposal of the representative of Morocco is agreeable to him?

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for putting me on the spot here. I would go along with our Moroccan colleague's suggestion. I always take counsel from him. He is a very wise multilateralist. He has been around this game for a long time.

My only sense is that we need to see what the proposals are. That is all I am saying. But if you circulate them, Mr. Chair, and we can all have a look at them and meet in our political and regional groups, with ample time prior to the opening day, it would be better than for us just to walk into the opening day and see them at that particular point.

The Chair: That is exactly my understanding. We will have the compilation of proposals finalized by 31 January. We could start our informal consultations during the second half of the month of February. I think that gives enough time for delegations and groups of countries to consult with their capitals and among themselves, and for us to see how close we are to having a smooth start on the first day of our substantive session on 6 April.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to proceed on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Chair: The next meeting of the Disarmament Commission in its formal format will therefore be announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

Before adjourning, it is my wish to appeal to all representatives, especially to the outgoing Chair, to help the Chair.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to have a group of friends of the Chair to assist in the smooth operation of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I invite kind volunteers to join the group of friends of the Chair.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.344

General Assembly *Official Records*

Disarmament Commission
344th meeting
Monday, 6 April 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).

Before we take up the first order of the day, allow me, on behalf of all the members of the Commission, to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who I am sure will provide substantive support to the session of the Commission. Her presence here today underlines the importance of the UNDC in general and the high expectations of the member States of this session in particular.

Allow me to thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, for the commendable, even outstanding, efforts he made during the last session to advance the Commission's work.

After several cycles of stalemates during which no recommendation was able to be made, our Commission, which plays a very important role in the process of developing and maintaining global disarmament standards, begins this year a new cycle, the first substantive stage of which begins today. As we know, the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime has for some years faced numerous obstacles that have considerably hampered any progress. In our view, the ongoing stalemate in the disarmament forums must lead to serious multilateral diplomatic efforts with a view to providing a collective and effective response to the security challenges that humankind faces. Unilateralism, bilateralism and plurilateralism can be good, but they are not a panacea for the international community to reach effective disarmament on conventional and nuclear weapons. We must therefore bear in mind that security is either comprehensive or it is not.

Underscoring the importance of last year's exchanges of views, it is my hope that the growing recognition of the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation issues will be conducive to the successful culmination of our session this year. We must take action to restore our Commission's credibility, as that is what is at stake. Consultations on this issue and others linked to improving the Commission's effectiveness will continue over the weeks to come.

Although progress on consensus recommendations depends on developments in the broader field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, I have the ultimate belief that our efforts will not be in vain and that the obstacles we face will be overcome. I trust that with the help of all in the next three weeks the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be able to provide guidance on the issues before it. Political will and the need to restore the credibility of the disarmament machinery will push us and help us get there, of that I am sure.

I now give the floor to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

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15-09678 (E)

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Ms. Kane (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): It is an honour to once again address the Disarmament Commission as it opens its 2015 substantive session. I commend the departing Chairman, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, for his dedicated stewardship of the work of the Commission and I recognize with appreciation the many efforts of his Bureau, especially the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Ambassador Al-Sudairy and Mr. Langeland. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Seck on his election as the Chair of the 2015 session. The Office of Disarmament Affairs stands ready to assist the Chair, the Bureau and all delegations throughout this session.

One of my first statements as High Representative was to this body in 2012, at the commencement of the Commission's last cycle (A/CN.10/PV.319). I will be the first to admit that the intervening three years have not been the best of times for disarmament. The prospects for further nuclear arms reductions are dim, and we may even be witnessing a roll-back of the hard-won disarmament gains of the last 25 years. I have never seen a wider divide between nuclear haves and nuclear have-nots over the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament. This schism is reflected here in the Commission and continues to act as a significant brake on forward movement.

The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is less than one month away, will need to find a way to bridge the fissure between those States parties that continue to support a step-by-step approach to disarmament and see the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference as a long-term goal, and those States parties — the overwhelming majority, I might add — that do not view the Action Plan as an open-ended commitment, demanding concrete evidence that the binding commitments made under article VI of the Treaty are being fulfilled.

Turning to the issue of conventional weapons, we are flooded daily with images of the brutal and internecine regional conflicts bedevilling the globe — conflicts fuelled by unregulated and illegal arms flows. It is estimated that more than 740,000 men, women, and children die each year as a result of armed violence. However, in the midst of these dark clouds, I have seen some genuine bright spots during my tenure as High Representative. The bitter conflict in Syria will not, in the words of the Secretary-General, be brought to a close without an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, but Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, facilitated by the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons agreed upon between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, has been one positive outcome from this bloody conflict. We have seen the complete removal of all declared chemicals from Syria and the commencement of a process to destroy all of Syria's chemical-weapons production facilities, although the so-called chlorine bombs remain a grave concern to the international community.

Emerging from the so-called disarmament malaise, the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament, supported by, again, a clear majority of States — as illustrated by the 155 States that supported New Zealand's statement in the First Committee — has continued to gather momentum. This is not a distraction from the so-called realist politics of nuclear disarmament. Rather, it is an approach that seeks to underscore the devastating human impact of nuclear weapons and to ground them in international humanitarian law. This movement is supported by almost 80 per cent of the States Members of the United Nations. These numbers cannot be ignored.

One of the international community's major achievements in the last year has been to bring the Arms Trade Treaty into force only a year and a half after it was negotiated. This truly historic treaty will play a critical role in ensuring that all actors involved in the arms trade must be held accountable and must be expected to comply with internationally agreed standards, for example, by ensuring that their arms exports are not going to be used to violate arms embargoes or to fuel conflict and by exercising better control over arms and ammunition imports in order to prevent diversion or retransfers to unauthorized users. To my mind, these achievements all highlight the possibility of achieving breakthroughs in disarmament and non-proliferation even in the most trying of international climates.

Today is the last time I will address this body, and it is with considerable regret that I must, once again, note the Commission's absence of consensus in pursuing its mandate. It is disheartening to see the Commission devolve into an annual procedural box-checking exercise. We are unfortunately witnessing a triumph of ritual over concrete results. But, to paraphrase Shakespeare's Mark Antony, I come neither to bury the Disarmament Commission nor to praise it, but to encourage it and to cajole it. The Commission

has an integral role to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its development of guidelines and recommendations has the potential to inspire future General Assembly resolutions, while also preparing the ground for new multilateral treaties. Fulfilling this potential, however, will require the Commission to work actively to seek compromises that will expand our common ground.

It is worth recalling that between 1979 and 1999, the Commission was exceptionally active. It was able to adopt 16 guidelines, recommendations and declarations across a wide array of vital issues, many of them agreed upon during the height of Cold War tensions. If these results could be achieved during such difficult times, surely they can be achieved today. By adopting a new three-year cycle deliberative agenda, the Commission can collectively cast its vote for multilateralism, for disarmament as an essential means to strengthen international peace and security and for the United Nations as an indispensable common forum for the pursuit of common interests.

As recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/77, the Commission should direct its attention to more specific subjects, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item. Should the Commission decide to pursue this route there is an abundance of issues to choose from, including the reports of various groups of governmental experts on topics ranging from disarmament and development to outer space and the reduction of military budgets. Alternatively, the Commission could choose to tackle one of the emerging international security threats of the twenty-first century, prominent among which are cyberthreats and the evolving use of unmanned aerial vehicles.

The point I am trying to make is that in an ever more complicated international security environment, the Disarmament Commission, as a key component of the United Nations disarmament machinery, has an increasingly important function to deliberate and make recommendations that benefit our collective security. I welcome the Commission's efforts to consider how to enhance its efficiency and encourage it to seek new and innovative ideas.

However, procedural change without corresponding substantive achievement will mean little in the grander scheme of things. What is required is the political will of Member States to take us out of the current morass and produce tangible results capable of advancing the important disarmament issues of today. They may be rare, but I have seen real efforts towards compromise and cooperation during my time as High Representative. Each of these initiatives has resulted in the enhanced security of all States. While the chasm between positions can seem wide, it is really the Commission's duty to bridge it. It should make this its legacy. In the Office of Disarmament Affairs it has a ready and willing ally.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Kane for her statement.

Election of other officers

The Chair (*spoke in French*): As members will recall, the Commission has yet to elect Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur from the regional groups.

I have been informed that consultations are still ongoing within the Group of African States, the Group of Asia and Pacific States and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chair, and we will therefore take up the election of Vice-Chairs from those groups at a later stage.

However, I am pleased to inform the Commission that the following endorsements have been received.

The Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Ms. Marija Perišić, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Serbia, for Vice-Chair, and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Bulgaria, as Rapporteur from the Group of Eastern European States. The Group of Western European and Other States has endorsed Mr. Andrea Romussi, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Italy, and Mr. Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Portugal, as Vice-Chairs from the Group of Western European and Other States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Ms. Marija Perišić, Mr. Andrea Romussi, and Mr. Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva as Vice-Chairs, and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva as the Rapporteur, of the Commission of the 2015 substantive session, by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Commission, I would like to warmly congratulate the

elected representatives and wish them every success in discharging their duties. I am sure that they will make an important contribution to the smooth work of the Commission this year. On a personal note, I know I will count on their support and counsel as a vital aspect of the work of the Bureau in this substantive session.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.345

General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
345th meeting
Monday, 6 April 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Election of other officers

The Chair (*spoke in French*): As members will recall, the Commission has yet to elect five Vice-Chairs from three regional groups.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this the first time my delegation has taken the floor in this substantive session, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of Mexico's full support for your work.

In my capacity as coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean States, I would like to inform the Commission that our regional group has endorsed the candidature of Mr. Claudio Garrido, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Chile, for one of the posts of Vice-Chair from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. When I have some information about the candidate from our region who will take up the other post of Vice-Chair set aside for us, I will let the Commission know.

The Chair: I thank the representative of Mexico for her nomination of Mr. Claudio Garrido, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Chile, as Vice-Chair of the Commission from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Claudio Garrido of Chile as Vice-Chair of the Commission for the 2015 substantive session, by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission, I would like to warmly congratulate the elected representative and wish him every success in discharging his duties.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

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15-09684 (E)

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United Nations A/CN.10/PV.346

General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
346th meeting
Tuesday, 7 April 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the provisional agenda for the 2015-2017 substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission

The Chair: Based on yesterday's consultations — on the Chair's informal paper in particular — in both the morning and afternoon sessions, in both multilateral and bilateral formats, in the room and outside the room, the Chair has formed the opinion that the only way for the Commission to come together on an agenda for its 2015 substantive session is to preserve the agenda items from the previous cycles, on the understanding that consultations will continue and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third item as mandated in paragraph 5 of resolution 69/77. In view of the foregoing, I would like to propose the following items for the agenda of the substantive session.

The first agenda item would be "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". The second agenda item would be "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". I would very much appreciate hearing delegations' reactions to this proposal.

Ms. Benhabouche (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to ask a question, if I may. Yesterday, we received a non-paper containing proposals that the Chair circulated for the purposes of consultations with a view to obtaining delegations' reactions to them. Today, I see that there is a new document being circulated for the same purposes. I would just like to know whether the latter document replaces the former, on the basis of which we were going to have consultations today, or is it a complement to that first document?

The Chair (*spoke in French*): Following our discussions last night, we drew certain conclusions, and in order to make progress, the Chair is proposing what he just proposed.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the new informal paper II. This is a proposal that will get us closer to a consensus.

I would like to propose that we adjourn the formal meeting and go into an informal meeting in order to have a discussion on your proposal, Mr. Chair, since you have invited delegations to react to the package that you proposed.

The Chair: I put to a decision the Iranian proposal to adjourn the formal meeting and open an informal meeting.

There being no objection to the proposal, let us adjourn the formal meeting and have an informal meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

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15-09760 (E)

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United Nations A/CN.10/PV.347

General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
347th meeting
Tuesday, 7 April 2015, 12.55 p.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 12.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chair: Members of the Commission may recall that, at its organizational session on 19 January, the Commission took note of the provisional agenda for the 2015 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.74, with the understanding that the agenda would be revised and formally adopted after consensus was reached on items 4 and 5.

I would like to propose that the following items be added to the provisional agenda for the 2015-2017 substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission on the understanding that consultations will continue on the ways and means to implement General Assembly resolution 69/77. Agenda item 4 will read "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". Agenda item 5 will read "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.74/Rev.1.

The agenda was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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15-09766 (E)

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United Nations A/CN.10/PV.348

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

348th meeting

Tuesday, 7 April 2015, 3 p.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Election of other officers

The Chair: Before the Commission moves to hear from delegations in the general debate, there is one more pressing issue in terms of the organization of work, namely, the election of the Chairs of the Working Groups. It is my understanding that there is a general agreement on the candidatures of the Chairs of the Working Groups.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, and Mr. Bouchaib El Oumni, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Permanent Mission of Morocco, as the Chairs of Working Group I and Working Group II, respectively.

It was so decided.

General debate

The Chair: In commencing the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, we will start with the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible. As we have only a day and a half for general debate and to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that the rolling list implies that they should be prepared to speak at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this year's substantive session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups, namely, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan and Minister Plenipotentiary Bouchaib El Oumni of Morocco, on their elections, and would like to assure the Commission of the Movement's full cooperation.

NAM stresses the need for concrete results in the 2015-2017 cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and urges all member States to show the required political will and flexibility to that end. While highlighting the importance of the discussions held in the last cycle, the Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to agree on concrete recommendations on the issues on the Commission's agenda.

NAM underscores its long-standing position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism

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as the core principle of negotiation in these areas. In this regard, the Movement reaffirms the Disarmament Commission's relevance and centrality — with its universal membership, and as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations — for considering specific disarmament issues and submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Commission has contributed to the field of disarmament and arms control in the past, including by reaching a consensus on guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional arms control. NAM regrets that the Commission has been unable to achieve success during previous cycles, due to a lack of political will and to the inflexible positions taken by certain nuclear-weapon States.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, and NAM strongly calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, weapons and delivery systems in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal undertaking that they made in 2000 and further reiterated in 2010 in the final documents of those years' Review Conferences.

NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential in strengthening international peace and security. In this context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures or any non-proliferation efforts.

The Movement underlines that General Assembly resolution 69/58, entitled "Follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament", provides a concrete road map to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. In this context, negotiations must commence as an urgent priority in the Conference on Disarmament for the prompt conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction, which would enable the international community to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it is dependent on a strong political will, without which no recommendation can help us overcome the current stalemate.

In the context of that resolution, the Movement invites Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals to commemorate 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons through all means of educational and public awareness-raising activities about the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humanity and the necessity of their total elimination.

The United Nations High-level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, to be convened no later than 2018, as decided through that same resolution, would indeed provide the international community with an opportunity to review progress made in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the High-Level Conference and to intensify international efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

NAM welcomes the continued consideration of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened by Austria on 8 and 9 December 2014. NAM emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and, pending that, all non-nuclear-weapon States should be provided, as a matter of high priority, with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances.

The Movement underlines that improving existing nuclear weapons or developing new types of nuclear weapons contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral legal obligation, as well as the commitments undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in this regard. NAM reaffirms the importance of the application by nuclear-weapon States of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear-disarmament obligations and undertakings.

The Movement underscores the importance of the full realization of the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM once again stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States and should not impose restrictions on access to material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries. The Movement stresses that the issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in this regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

NAM States parties to the NPT stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Treaty, and of implementing the action plans adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. NAM States parties to the NPT further underline that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, should be implemented without any further delay, and reaffirms that that resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, due to have been held in 2012, was not convened despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This runs contrary to the letter and the spirit of the 1995 resolution violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the commitments and obligations regarding the zone, as contained in the 1995 resolution and 2010 Action Plan, remain valid and yet unfulfilled. They strongly reject the alleged impediments presented by the conveners for not having convened the conference on schedule.

In this context, NAM States parties to the NPT deplore that Israel is the only party in the Middle East that has rejected participating in the conference as mandated in the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT call for the full and immediate implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East in order to avoid negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its 2015 review process, and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole. In this regard, NAM recalls that in the final document of the Tehran Summit of August 2012, the Heads of State or Government, while strongly supporting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, called upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps for the establishment of such a zone.

Pending the establishment of such a zone, they further demand that Israel, the only country of the region to have neither joined the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards, and conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. They express great concern about Israel's acquisition of nuclear capability, which poses a serious and ongoing threat to the security of neighbouring States, as well as other States. They condemn Israel for continuing to stockpile nuclear arsenals and call for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment used in the development of materials and facilities, resources or devices, and the extension of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular negotiations during the Conference on Disarmament, which remains the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

In conclusion, the Movement reiterates its full support for the Commission's work and believes that it should be intensified through strengthened political will with a view to achieving meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

At the outset, CELAC would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2015 substantive session, and to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia for his tireless work as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission last year.

CELAC reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. CELAC reiterates its willingness to work constructively to fulfil the tasks entrusted to the Commission.

The Community recalls the historic decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the States members of CELAC gathered in Havana on the occasion of the second summit of the Community on 28 and 29 January 2014 to formally declare Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, and reaffirm CELAC's ongoing commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful means, with the aim of forever eliminating the threat or use of force from our region. That decision was reiterated during the third summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January.

CELAC member States reaffirm the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, we express our opposition to the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons, which are inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and in security policies.

We express our strong support for the conclusion of universal legally binding instruments leading to effective, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament, in order to achieve the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons according to a multilaterally agreed timetable. We welcome the proposal of Cuba aimed at achieving the adoption of a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament, which was presented at the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014. In that regard, we highlight the fact that during the Community's summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the pledge made in Austria.

CELAC member States call for the negotiation and adoption, as soon as possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. While recalling the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, CELAC member States reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and the Charter of the United Nations. The Community reiterates that the only effective guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and prohibition.

CELAC member States express great concern at the humanitarian impact and global long-term consequences of any accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons. We believe that this issue should be raised whenever nuclear weapons are discussed. We therefore commend the organization of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, for their deliberations and contributions to the global discourse on achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As attested by the testimony of survivors and by scientific data and evidence, nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to security, to the development of peoples, and to civilization in general. Furthermore, it has been ascertained that no State or international organization has the capacity to successfully address and provide humanitarian assistance and protection in case of a nuclear blast. Those conferences also highlighted the ongoing risk of the detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or by design.

At the time of establishing the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, we confirmed the pride of our region in being the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we reiterate that the establishment of internationally recognized

nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international peace and security as well as the non-proliferation regime, and constitutes an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all reservations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to respect the denuclearized character of Latin America and the Caribbean, thus helping to eliminate the possible use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) have been a political, legal and institutional reference point in the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. OPANAL's experience is also an important legacy of the international community for inspiring the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

CELAC regrets the failure to implement the agreement to hold an international conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon- and weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, CELAC strongly believes that the establishment of such a zone would be a significant step in the peace process in the Middle East region. CELAC urges that such a conference be held as soon as possible, as agreed by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

We reaffirm the commitment of our States to the NPT and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of States to the development, research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy, without discrimination, and in conformity with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. The Community also reaffirms the commitment of all parties to the Treaty to facilitating the participation in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

CELAC emphasizes the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT and therefore urges States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear States. We also call on nuclear-weapon States to comply with their commitments under article VI of the Treaty and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons. We urge them to fully and immediately implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Community expresses its willingness to fully engage in the NPT Review Conference to be held in New York from 27 April to 22 May. CELAC urges those States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, ratification of which is indispensable to its entry into force, to accelerate their process of signing and/or ratifying this instrument as a matter of priority, as a demonstration of their political will and commitment to international peace and security.

As we recall the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September 2013, CELAC highlights its intention to ensure proper follow-up of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". And we welcome the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible term, aiming at adopting a treaty banning the development, production, procurement, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and providing for their destruction within a multilaterally agreed timeframe. The Community also welcomes the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We would like to highlight the events around the world to commemorate the first observation of this day and call on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action each year to commemorate that day.

CELAC is convinced that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons play an important role in contributing to the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States, and to the enhancement of stability and security, in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, abiding by the voluntary nature and the specific security concerns and situations of States. In that regard, it is worth recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, which contributes to the enhancement of international peace and security. We therefore encourage Member States to strengthen,

improve and extend the measures of confidence-building at all levels as appropriate. In that regard, the Community welcomes all transparency and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms already voluntarily undertaken by concerned States in their respective regions or subregions, as well as the information on such measures provided on a voluntary basis to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

The Community also reaffirms the crucial importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, and recognizes its significant contribution to efforts carried out in that area. CELAC also stresses the need for its full and effective implementation. CELAC underscores that the adoption of the outcome document of the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2012 gave the international community a clear goal and timeline to strengthen its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

CELAC reiterates the importance of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. CELAC emphasizes that work must continue at the multilateral level in the framework of the Programme of Action in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, advancing towards the adoption of legally binding instruments on marking and tracing and illicit brokering, in order to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons towards the illicit market.

We take note of the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June 2014, and we look forward to participating actively in the review cycle of the Programme of Action for 2014-2018, including the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in June.

The Community, in reaffirming the importance of regional and international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and their ammunition, agreed to establish a working group to study the crime of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. That working group has the mandate to study this issue comprehensively in order to generate proposals for mechanisms and procedures that will allow us to better and more effectively coordinate our efforts, on the basis of full respect for international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to strengthen, prevent and combat the illicit trade in that category of weapons for the benefit of citizen security.

CELAC expects that the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument on arms trade, can contribute to providing an effective response to the serious consequences that the illicit and non-regulated trade in arms represent for many people and States, in particular through the diversion of arms to non-State actors or unauthorized users, often linked to transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. We further hope that this Treaty can contribute to the prevention of armed conflict, armed violence and violations of human rights, including international instruments for the protection of human rights and humanitarian law.

At the same time, in the light of the entry into force of the Treaty in December 2014, we call for the Treaty to be implemented in a balanced, transparent and objective manner, respecting the sovereign right of all States to ensure their self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We recognize the wish of Mexico to host in 2015 the first conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and underscore its leadership during the preparatory process for that meeting, as well as the aspiration of Trinidad and Tobago to host the secretariat of the Treaty.

The issue of anti-personnel mines continues to demand the attention of the international community. CELAC welcomes the declaration of Central America as a mine-free zone. CELAC recognizes the value of the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service. Our group stresses the importance of cooperation for demining and assistance to victims, and hopes that the successes achieved in recent years will continue. We also take note of the Maputo+15 Declaration adopted at the third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in June 2014.

CELAC supports international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and by their use against civilian populations, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. It also recognizes and values the wish of any State to take multilaterally agreed

immediate steps regarding the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. Similarly, we recognize the recent accession of Belize to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the establishment of Central America as a cluster-ammunition-free zone during the fifth Meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in San José, Costa Rica in September 2014.

In closing, CELAC reaffirms the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only specialized negotiating body within the multilateral disarmament mechanism. The Community once again deeply regrets that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to agree on and implement its programme of work. CELAC urges all members of the Conference to show the political will necessary to ensure the commencement without delay of its substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, including through negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention; on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances; on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and on a non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that serve both non-proliferation and disarmament purposes.

Furthermore, the Community would like to point out the important work undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the assistance it provides to the countries of the region for the implementation of disarmament measures in various areas.

The Community regrets that the Disarmament Commission has been unable to make recommendations in previous cycles. It is fundamental that the Commission fulfil its mandate as expressed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We call upon the States Members of the United Nations to show the necessary flexibility and political will to make progress on these recommendations.

CELAC reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with the members of the Commission to achieve concrete results during this session. The Community calls on all delegations to show the political will necessary to enable the United Nations deliberative body to fulfil its mandate and formulate substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. Varma (India): The Indian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the 2015 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and assures you of its full cooperation. We would also like to thank you, Sir, for the consultations that you have held, including taking forward the work of the Commission towards the adoption earlier today of the agenda for the next triennial cycle. We would like to also convey our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, and Minister El Oumni of Morocco for taking on the responsibilities for the two Working Groups, and we pledge to them our full support.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by Ambassador Percaya of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The UNDC meets this year against the backdrop of considerable disappointment that it was not able to adopt recommendations in 2014, but also of the strong support of the General Assembly, expressed in resolution 69/77, which called for the UNDC's revitalization in this new triennial cycle. India continues to value the role of the Commission — the only body with universal membership and the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

While recalling its past successes in adopting guidelines and recommendations on issues of continuing value to the international community, it is important to stress that the current difficulties of the UNDC relate less to any inherent deficiencies in the machinery and more to the lack of political will of member States to invest in multilateral outcomes that would be of enduring value to the entire international community. At a time of growing mistrust and rising international tensions, the role of the Commission as a platform for dialogue and cooperation assumes greater significance. The Commission can do more to improve its functioning by undertaking focused and results-oriented discussions on items on its agenda.

India attaches the highest priority to global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. As such, India has supported

the proposal put forward by NAM for the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention. Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate.

India participated in the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in the expectation that renewed attention to the most serious threat to the survival of humankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons would help generate momentum for restraints on the use of nuclear weapons and thus correct an imbalance in the international legal discourse that has focused exclusively on restraints on possession. We have called for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence, and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. India's resolutions in the First Committee on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and on reducing nuclear danger have received the support of a large number of Member States.

The Disarmament Commission has contributed valuable guidelines in the area of practical confidence-building measures concerning conventional weapons, and came close to adopting consensus recommendations last year, though in the end they remained elusive. There is merit in building on those useful discussions with a view to bridging the remaining gaps. In our view, the key principles on the subject remain valid. The initiation and adoption of confidence-building measures must remain the prerogative of the States concerned and subject to their consent, and must be implemented in a manner that the relevant States are comfortable with.

The General Assembly has mandated the Commission to keep in mind a proposal to include a third item on its agenda for 2015, on which the Chair will be continuing consultations. While our priority remains the agenda item on nuclear disarmament, we will not stand in the way of consensus on a third agenda item, especially if it has the potential to expand the ground for consensus-building and to help the international community respond in a meaningful way to new and emerging challenges relevant to the disarmament agenda. The Commission can also benefit from the expertise of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in preparing background papers, insofar as there is adequate support for UNIDIR in doing so.

As we begin a fresh triennial cycle, this year's session assumes special significance in laying firm foundations for future progress. I would like to assure the Commission of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation.

Ms. Kuznetsova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your important post. Owing to the time constraints, I will give a shortened version of Russia's position, the full text of which will be circulated to delegations by the Secretariat.

The Russian Federation has always been a strong advocate of a comprehensive multilateral approach to addressing disarmament issues, provided that it conforms to the principles of strategic stability and equal and undiminished security for all. We reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in international efforts to ensure global stability and combat new challenges and threats. We are committed to working to strengthen, improve and perfect the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, of which the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is an integral part.

There can be no question that the UNDC should fulfil its mandate. The task it was assigned almost 40 years ago at the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament, of making recommendations on various problems in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, has lost none of its relevance. In our view, the Commission's solid expertise and years of experience are more necessary than ever for resolving issues of international security and global stability.

We should be under no illusions. The problems preventing the other elements of the United Nations disarmament triad from functioning effectively are present in the Commission as well. This is due above all to a lack of political will among States for mutual respect for differences in their priorities. We are willing to consider any ideas aimed at enhancing the UNDC's effectiveness, but the chief criterion should be the principle of "do no harm". The Commission has a reservoir of experience of productive work based on its existing rules of procedure and founded on the principle of consensus, which is fundamental

to the negotiation process in the area of multilateral arms control. Abandoning the principle of consensus would be fraught with damaging consequences for international security.

The next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, possibly the most important event in our field, will open three weeks from now. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation and international security regime. One of the Conference's most important tasks will be to affirm the commitment to the Treaty's objectives and the obligations it imposes, as well as to strengthening the Treaty, based on the 2010 Review Conference's long-term action plan (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), which has retained its relevance. Its consensus-based provisions, founded on a balance between the three pillars of the NPT — non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — should be implemented. We hope that the Review Conference will also succeed in formulating new decisions as a follow-up to the action plan.

Liberating the world from the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, remains one of the international community's top priorities. Russia has been working actively to that end by taking concrete steps to limit and shrink its nuclear arsenal, which it has been significantly reducing for the past quarter of a century. That process will continue under the terms of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, in accordance with which by 2018 Russia's strategic arsenal will not exceed 1,550 nuclear warheads on 700 deployed launchers. We are working actively to implement that goal.

As Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin has affirmed, we are ready for a serious substantive dialogue on nuclear-disarmament issues — but a serious dialogue only, with no double standards. In particular, it is essential that we take into account the capabilities of high-precision non-nuclear weapons. We cannot permit a situation in which countries that are leaders in developing and producing such systems, augmented through ballistic-missile defences, gain a clear military advantage, which threatens to destroy strategic parity and destabilize the international situation in general.

We believe we cannot make progress towards a nuclear-free world without creating the appropriate international conditions that will enable us to reduce and limit nuclear armaments while strengthening strategic stability and providing equal and undiminished security for all. It is exactly that pathway that is envisaged in the decisions adopted within the NPT framework. One of the most destructive factors continues to be the unilateral and unconstrained deployment by the United States of its global missile defence system. The United States missile defence systems have been implemented under manufactured pretexts and to the detriment of other States' security, seriously complicating international relations not only in the Euro-Atlantic zone but in the Asia-Pacific region as well. The accelerated deployment by the United States of its missile defence system will be a serious obstacle to further nuclear disarmament and creates dangerous conditions that could lead to the resumption of the nuclear arms race.

Such a situation can be mitigated only if States developing anti-missile capabilities are governed — not just in words but in deeds — by the universal principle, agreed on within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that says that it is unacceptable for one State to attempt to strengthen its national security at the expense of the security of other States. Strict compliance with this rule should become the starting point for seeking mutually acceptable outcomes on any issue of international security.

Another strategically negative factor is some States' unwillingness to forgo the possibility of putting weapons in outer space and to take steps to prevent an arms race in outer space, particularly those that would enable an appropriate legally binding international agreement to be reached. Russia and China's draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against objects in outer space could serve as a basis for such an agreement. Its updated version, which is under consideration at the Conference on Disarmament, has the support of all responsible States.

An important interim measure concerning the placement of weapons in outer space is the Russian initiative to not be the first to place weapons in outer space. Our initiative already enjoys the official support of all Collective Security Treaty Organization countries, as well as Brazil, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Argentina and Cuba. A greater number of States are now ready to follow that excellent example. During the

current session of the General Assembly, a resolution on the issue was adopted for the first time, with 34 sponsors. Voting on that resolution demonstrated that our initiative enjoys the overwhelming support of the international community. And those States that have been forced to abstain from supporting the resolution not only demonstrated their dependency on States that do plan to place weapons in outer space, but their inability to express their own national viewpoints.

With respect to the issue of nuclear disarmament, further steps are required, in particular by any State that has nuclear-weapon capacity. All such States must be involved in the process. Within the framework of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, Russia and the United States of America came to the conclusion that third-party States must also be included. Clearly, relevant multilateral, political and norminative frameworks must be established in order to address the issue. We do, of course, welcome unilateral steps taken by individual States to reduce their nuclear potential; however, we must also take into account the fact that such measures are not enshrined in any international legal document, are not subject to verification and may be revised at any point in time.

Among the most positive recent events, we should look to the unique chemical demilitarization operation that took place in Syria. Last summer's removal of all chemical weapons components from Syria and their subsequent destruction were made possible by the unprecedented political will of the Syrian Government, the decisive political and material support provided by the Russian Federation, and, undoubtedly, the work of the United Nations, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other interested States. We believe that any further work concerning Syrian chemical weapons should be done under the auspices of the OPCW. Since joining the Chemical Weapons Convention, Damascus has demonstrated complete transparency, and has cooperated fully, which has often been reflected in United Nations and OPCW documents.

We would also draw attention to the highly lethal conventional weapons found in individual States and regions, which significantly increase the risk of the outbreak of armed conflict. In that regard, we believe it is crucial to establish multilateral transparency mechanisms, identify destabilizing factors and the proliferation of arms in a timely manner, and also promote dialogue between States in order to eliminate such concerns. We believe there is a need to take specific measures and effective steps aimed at preventing the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, including by introducing a universal ban on the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors, enhancing control on the re-export of such weapons, combating illegal brokerage, continuously controlling their exportation, conditions of storage and use by importers. Such measures would reduce the risk of those weapons falling into the hands of armed groups and terrorist organizations. We must remember that our main task is to prevent weapons from becoming tools used to violate the fundamental human rights or destabilize civil society.

This rapid overview of the current challenges faced by the Commission reveals the importance of basing our discussions on consensus and ensuring that the results are acceptable and advantageous to all. Therefore we would counsel against trying to reinvent the wheel. We should not think up new formats, but instead concentrate our efforts on intensive work to find adequate solutions to current problems. The effectiveness of the Commission depends not on some sort of short-term reform measures but on specific measures by individual States.

So let us be self-critical. The situation in the Commission reflects the way we work. I would like to assure the Commission that the Russian delegation is ready to work constructively with all delegations during the 2015 session on disarmament in order to work towards an approach that is acceptable to all.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): Malaysia extends our warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Allow me also to congratulate other Bureau members on their elections, as well as the chairpersons of the respective working groups. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia for his contribution and efforts as Chair of last year's session of the UNDC.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Malaysia welcomes the constructive spirit among delegations through which we were able to reach consensus on our substantive agenda for the 2015-2017 cycle. The priority on consensus is important to us and

reaffirms the continued relevancy of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The UNDC takes an inclusive and deliberative approach, which is necessary to achieve an outcome that enjoys the broadest possible support. We recognize the difficulties inherent in realizing the disarmament agenda, whether for substantive UNDC debates or the broader goal of general and complete disarmament. My delegation views those challenges as an opportunity for all of us to take stock of the impasse in which we find ourselves and reaffirm our resolve to collectively reinvigorate the process. We call on all Member States and groups to renew their opposition to proliferation and demonstrate flexibility and political will in order to breach the gaps on issues of contention.

Within a few weeks many of us will be participating in the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons here in New York. Notwithstanding the fact that some of the Member States present here are not parties to the Treaty, it is our hope that a successful outcome to this year's UNDC session will help pave the road for consensus at the Review Conference. Malaysia believes that this year's Review Conference should continue the momentum towards greater cooperation in achieving the treaty's objective of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, my delegation gives particular importance to the obligations set forth under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, namely, that

> "[e]ach of the [p]arties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Since 1996, Malaysia has introduced the annual First Committee resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons", which calls upon all States to immediately fulfil the aforementioned obligations by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons, and providing for their elimination. In addition, in 2007, Costa Rica and Malaysia submitted to the General Assembly a model nuclear-weapons convention which proposed legal, technical and political elements for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Clearly, the international community is far from reaching these goals. As such, Malaysia believes that the UNDC, as the deliberative body of the United Nations on disarmament, should focus its discussions on concrete proposals for the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as elements for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons as proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement. Malaysia stands ready to work with Member States on this initiative as well as on any other proposal with the ultimate aim of totally eliminating nuclear weapons.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, which was held in New York in 2014. We look forward to the upcoming Meeting of Governmental Experts in June to further strengthen and promote international cooperation on the Programme of Action which will enhance its effectiveness and complement existing bilateral, regional and international agreements to prevent, combat and eradicate the threat posed by small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, Malaysia will continue to support confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons at all levels, as that would contribute to strengthening international peace and security. Despite the nuanced and divergent views among Member States on this issue, my delegation hopes that in this year's deliberations in the UNDC we will be able to find common ground and move forward.

In conclusion, Malaysia looks forward to a more results-oriented session in 2015, and we pledge our full support and cooperation to you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau, as well as to other Member States, in order to achieve this end.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Mr. Chair, let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year. On behalf of my delegation, I assure you, Sir, of our full support and cooperation.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The global security landscape is becoming increasingly complex. Even as old disputes remain unresolved in some regions, new conflicts and tensions have emerged from Europe and the Middle East all the way to Asia. The promise of a new century of peace and stability is now giving way to the gloomy advent of new cold wars.

The disarmament regime and architecture is not immune to this larger trend. There are clear differences of perspective, approach and modalities among Member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Progress on nuclear disarmament remains stalled. Some nuclear-weapon States are willing to give up neither their large inventories of nuclear weapons nor their modernization programmes, even as they pursue non-proliferation with great zeal. And some 30 non-nuclear-weapon States — members of nuclear-armed alliances — continue to rely robustly on nuclear weapons while advocating abstinence by other States that are facing real security deficits, some of which are exacerbated by extravagant arms exports and nuclear cooperation.

Many States continue to pursue policies of granting waivers and exemptions from long-held non-proliferation principles, thus contributing to insecurity and imbalances in certain regions, especially South Asia. Military expenditures are rising and conventional weapons inventories expanding, including in South Asia. Meanwhile, new threats have arisen in areas such as the hostile use of outer space, offensive cybercapabilities, including cyberattacks on safeguarded nuclear facilities, the development and use of lethal autonomous weapon systems and armed drones, as well as the development of advanced conventional hypersonic systems with global reach.

The existing and emerging challenges to global and regional security — and consequently to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament — need to be addressed holistically on the basis of constructive and cooperative multilateralism. For over a decade, Pakistan has been advocating renewal and rebuilding of an international consensus on disarmament issues, based, inter alia, on the principle of equal security for all. This Commission, as a deliberative body with universal membership, can play an important role in evolving such a consensus. We recognize that consensus-building will be a difficult task, but we take this opportunity to put forward some ideas that we feel are essential to promoting greater cooperation in strengthening global security.

First, in developing a new approach, we must start from the same basic premise, that is, recognition of the right to equal security for all States. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament adopted the principle of equal security for all States, both in the non-conventional and conventional fields, and at the regional and international levels. This is an essential prerequisite for progress in the areas of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Second, we must address the underlying security considerations that drive smaller States to seek weapons to defend themselves. These motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States, and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

Third, the nuclear-weapon States must demonstrate a renewed commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament that reduces and eliminates nuclear warheads and delivery systems within a reasonable time frame. Without this commitment, we will see further erosion of the bargain of the global non-proliferation regime, resulting in greater insecurity for all States. The eventual objective must be total elimination of nuclear weapons within the context of a re-energized collective multilateral security system.

Fourth, we must adopt an agreed, criteria-based and non-discriminatory approach in order to develop a framework to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate international safeguards. Advances in technology and improved inspections regime under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency have made it possible to promote proliferation-resistant nuclear technology.

Fifth, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States should be given assurances that they will not be threatened with the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The security assurances offered by nuclear-weapon States need to be translated into a universal, unconditional and legally binding treaty. As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan has consistently advocated such a treaty.

Sixth, we must develop a universal and non-discriminatory agreement to address concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of anti-ballistic missile systems, which are inherently destabilizing and, of course, provoke missile build-ups.

Seventh, we must strengthen the international legal regime to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

Eighth, as a pragmatic step towards disarmament, the nuclear-weapon States need to halt future production and address the issue of existing stocks of weapon-usable fissile materials through a fissile material treaty negotiated multilaterally at the Conference on Disarmament.

Ninth, the development and use of drones and lethal autonomous robots need to be curbed, internationally regulated and made subject to international humanitarian law.

Tenth, regional issues that entail nuclear and missile aspects require approaches that go beyond the traditional framework of disarmament and non-proliferation. Hopefully the current challenges relating to the nuclear issues of countries in the Middle East and northeast Asia will be addressed in a cooperative framework. Pakistan supports the fulfilment in good faith by States of their international obligations in the area of international security. We also support the objective of creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. Resolution of those two issues can only be promoted through dialogue and negotiations.

Eleventh, there is also an urgent need for mutual and balanced reductions in armed forces and conventional armaments. As laid down in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), those negotiations should be conducted with particular emphasis on militarily significant States. The disturbing trend of escalation in the number and sophistication of conventional weapons has to be arrested, as this has a direct relationship to the continued reliance on nuclear weapons. Pakistan welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We consider this milestone a first step towards regulating the trade and transfer of conventional weapons. Trade and transfer issues are organically linked to equally important aspects of excessive production and export, as well as arms control. A comprehensive approach is therefore needed to deal with both causes and manifestations of violence, wars and killings arising from the use of conventional weapons, small or large.

We support the development of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional arms. This has remained one of the traditional items on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and we have contributed constructively to deliberations on this in the last decade. We look forward to the Commission's proceedings on this important issue this year.

The challenges facing the international disarmament agenda and machinery are exclusive neither to the UNDC nor to the Conference on Disarmament. Other parts of the disarmament machinery are confronted with similar difficulties. Let us consider the state of affairs in the First Committee. In the past 10 years, several measures have been taken to rationalize and improve the Committee's methods of work. The primary goals of those efforts were to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, as well as results. Yet despite those measures, the effectiveness, authority and outcomes of the First Committee are apparent. More importantly, changes in working methods have not led to results on substance, such as, for example, movement on the priority accorded to nuclear disarmament.

Similarly, the Commission has not been able to agree on any document for more than a decade and a half. The differences in perceptions and priorities among Member States have been so profound that the Commission has not been able at times to even agree on the wording of its nuclear agenda item. The Disarmament Commission has also attempted in its own way to aid the improvement of its working methods. There is, of course, always room for improvement, but the real issue is how to deal with the political dynamics, the security challenges and developments outside the conference rooms of the United Nations. We stand ready to engage other delegations in efforts to reinvigorate the Commission, as well as other elements of the global disarmament machinery.

Finally, Pakistan calls for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament, as this can provide the best chance for breaking the current impasse in disarmament, re-energize the role of the United Nations in promoting cooperative multilateralism in global security, and also respond to the demands of

civil society worldwide for a world that is safe and secure without nuclear and other non-conventional and advanced conventional weapons. The high-level segments of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament, while valuable, are no substitute for a fourth special session on disarmament. If some 50-plus Heads of State and Government can meet every two years since 2010 at nuclear security summits that deal with the security of about 15 per cent of the world's nuclear material, surely world leaders should meet in the General Assembly's special session devoted to disarmament to discuss security in a world of some 17,000 nuclear warheads.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Mr. Chair, I would like to express my delegation's warmest appreciation to you for your leadership of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and to Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia for his leadership during the previous cycle.

My delegation wishes to record its most grateful appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, who opened our session, for her outstanding stewardship of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and her many accomplishments, and to her Office and its very able team for its support our deliberations.

There is no doubt that we must break the stalemate that has prevailed in the UNDC since 1999 and revitalize the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery to address the many new threats arising today. Kazakhstan will engage itself fully in pressing for momentum and for improvement in the working methods of the UNDC, based on the resolutions of the General Assembly and other disarmament platforms. Our thrust should be to consolidate the achievements of the past while responding to changing political situations and challenges.

It is clear that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must enjoy equal attention in the context of recent regional and global developments. We welcome the great strides made in winning support for the Arms Trade Treaty. Now that the Treaty has come into force, our focus must be on its effective implementation. We call for stronger regulation of the legal traffic in arms and strict adherence to the Treaty's provisions. Overall, trust- and confidence-building measures are critical to all aspects of disarmament and the vast range of complex related issues. The range of issues addressed in each of our segments is critically important. A deeper focus on their complexities would therefore yield better results.

In the light of rising tensions escalating in various regions of the world, Kazakhstan calls for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Additional Protocols. Every effort must be made to exercise genuine political will and compromise to ensure a successful outcome of the 2015 Review Conference and for us to move ahead. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is most critical. The CTBT can strengthen the NPT to move the process forward. For the period 2015-2017, Japan and Kazakhstan are co-Presidents of the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT, and we pledge to do our utmost to get the annex 2 countries to sign in order to safeguard our fragile and threatened world.

With regard to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, my delegation is pleased to report that the five nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol to the Treaty in May 2014, thereby marking a significant landmark. We are also working to guarantee the physical security of nuclear materials and equipment in order to prevent nuclear proliferation and terrorism in the region. With the approval and supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my country will host an international low-enriched-uranium bank in the eastern part of Kazakhstan.

We most warmly welcome the framework for an agreement between Iran and the 5+1 countries, and call on all parties to bring this process to fruition by the end of June. We are pleased that Kazakhstan also contributed to those negotiations by hosting two rounds in Almaty.

Our efforts to pursue the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must continue. Despite the political turbulence prevailing in the region, we strongly urge concerned Member States to hold a conference on the Middle East at the earliest possible time.

In order to further the overall goal of disarmament at the global level, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has proposed the adoption of a universal declaration for a nuclear-weapon-free world as the first step towards the drafting of a convention aimed at abolishing nuclear weapons.

A well-functioning Conference on Disarmament is sine qua non. If our efforts to adopt a strong programme of work continue to fail, we propose that the General Assembly consider reorganizing the disarmament machinery.

It is time that we begin to draft a fissile material cut-off treaty and a convention against nuclear weapons, and put into operation the five-point plan of the Secretary-General. In addition, the growing scenarios of the possible use of other weapons of mass destruction — including biological and chemical weapons — should be averted at all costs.

We wish to highlight the singular efforts of the High Representative in negotiating the removal of chemical weapons from Syria. At the same time, we urge ongoing vigilance against the possible recurrence, and thus greater support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, whose efficient operations in Syria we commend most highly.

Peace is necessary for development, and vice versa, in a globalized, interconnected world in the post-2015 period. Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts must therefore move in parallel with other global processes, such as poverty reduction, inclusive development, the rule of law, climate change, gender equality and others.

The regional efforts of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs deserve our full recognition and must be strengthened, as they contribute to realizing the vision of one United Nations, not only in the field of development but also in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at the country, subregional and regional levels. The regional branches should be enhanced in playing their valuable role in the coordination of polices and activities in security-sector reform and the prevention and reduction of armed violence. Kazakhstan stands ready to provide, with other member States, a new momentum to the disarmament machinery so that, together, we can promote security, human advancement, peace, justice and human rights.

In conclusion, allow me to mention that I am truly honoured to be Chair of Working Group I on nuclear disarmament. This is a new cycle and so success is imperative if we are to make a contribution to the disarmament machinery, especially the work of the First Committee since it is held here in New York. What we discuss in these days will also have a bearing on the NPT Review Conference, to be held in the next two months. I look forward to the guidance, cooperation and support of the Commission, which are absolutely essential for us to move forward.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment and express Mexico's support to you in your work.

The year 2015 is a symbolic year in disarmament as it marks 70 years since the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 100 years since weapons of mass destruction were used for the first time, in Ypres, Belgium. 40 years since the Convention on Biological Weapons entered into force and 20 since the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, it is the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the agreement of a new development agenda, a confluence of events that presents an excellent opportunity to reflect on the goals and work of the Organization.

Mexico expresses its regret that the United Nations disarmament machinery continues without fulfilling its mandate. Such deadlock and paralysis run counter to the spirit of multilateralism. Multilateral forums should serve as a space for countries to settle their conflicts and for processes leading to stables choices. Unfortunately, decision-making in the disarmament forums seems to be discouraged by the lack of political will and by prevailing circumstances. However, we note that the vast majority of States have shown themselves ready to negotiate and, in particular, that the number of voices speaking out against the illogical foundation of global security on weapons is growing.

These Headquarters will soon host the ninth five-year Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in which Mexico will work constructively to attain a substantive outcome that advances the implementation of all provisions, commitments and obligations of the Treaty. Since the dimensions of non-proliferation and those related to protecting the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy have been met, the utmost priority must be given to compliance with article VI of the NPT, since no progress has been made on the disarmament pillar. In this sense, Mexico welcomes all initiatives that would lead to progress towards the prohibition and definitive elimination of nuclear weapons through multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations under the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency.

The three conferences held to date on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons have made a significant contribution to the debate and discussion on the scientific evidence and factual data available to better understand the impact of and risk posed by nuclear weapons. Mexico therefore urges that the findings of these conferences be considered in all forums where nuclear disarmament is discussed, including here in the Disarmament Commission. Mexico invites all States to give serious consideration to that proposal as a demonstration of their commitment to the very survival of humankind, and we urge all Member States to endorse the Austrian pledge, which has already been endorsed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Given the fact that those conferences were held outside of the framework of the United Nations, we believe that both the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission can and should incorporate consideration of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons into their discussions, since it is on those discussions that all of our actions and discussions should be based and that we should thereby progress together in disarming, not as an end in itself, but as a tool for attaining peace and security and preserving human security.

As recalled earlier this year, Mexico, in its capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, submitted a comprehensive programme of work aimed at conserving the nature and mandate of that forum as entrusted to it by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. However, the deadlock in that forum continues, and it has not been possible to begin negotiations towards agreements on legally binding universal treaties on disarmament in almost 20 years.

In the Disarmament Commission and in an effort to make progress towards nuclear disarmament, the delegation of Mexico expressed its support for the proposal made by Austria yesterday that the Commission should include under its first agenda item the aim of making recommendations on achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the identification of effective measures to bridge the legal gap for the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons, and to prevent the catastrophic consequences of their use.

We regret that the Disarmament Commission — a deliberative body of the General Assembly — has not been able to put on its agenda the discussion of such effective measures or of the harm caused by nuclear weapons. In this regard, my delegation would like to state that we are letting our institutional settings for such discussion go to a waste and we are failing to fulfil the mandate enshrined to the disarmament machinery by the United Nations. This is cause for concern, as Mexico believes that genuine and lasting peace must be supported by international law, not by the accumulation of weapons. The machinery should therefore assist and not block normative progress in disarmament.

With regard to conventional weapons, Mexico welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014 and reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of that instrument. The international community now faces the challenge of implementing the regime established by the Treaty. Mexico City will therefore host, from 24 to 27 August 2015, the first conference of the States parties to the ATT, which will contribute to the configuration of a global regime to fight the effects of the illicit trade in conventional weapons in our societies.

With regard to disarmament confidence-building measures, Mexico reiterates that the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility must apply to all disarmament efforts. One of the most effective ways, in Mexico's view, to build trust and transparency among countries is to cooperate with regional and international organizations by submitting timely, transparent, complete and clear information.

Mexico holds the position that multilateral forums should encourage and not inhibit deliberations and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission will free the potential of this forum to deliver conclusions and recommendations that bring us closer to a safer and more peaceful world.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the 2015 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).

Mr. Chair, I wish to thank you so very much for all you have done thus far to advance our work. In the coming days, Sir, you may count on the full support of the United States as you fulfil your important responsibilities. We also congratulate the other members

of the Commission's Bureau on their elections. In addition, we thank the 2014 UNDC Chair, Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia, for his intrepid efforts, both last year and this year, to help set this Commission on a productive course.

I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Ambassador Kim Won-soo as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and express our gratitude for the able contributions of High Representative Angela Kane.

The Disarmament Commission is meeting on the eve of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains critical to our common security. Protecting its authority, while strengthening its implementation in all its aspects, are goals that all States parties to the Treaty share and that should guide our respective approaches to the upcoming Review Conference.

The NPT is an essential foundation for efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, and to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. These three mutually reinforcing pillars benefit all NPT parties. All parties should support and strengthen them. At the Review Conference, we look forward to working with all States parties to advance realistic, achievable objectives. We believe there are many areas where we could reach consensus on concrete measures to strengthen the NPT. We hope that parties will not allow divisive agendas to stand in the way of reaching the broadest possible consensus.

The Action Plan approved by consensus in 2010 was an unprecedented, breakthrough achievement. The Review Conference provides an opportunity to reaffirm the action plan, take stock of its implementation and update it where possible. At the Review Conference, the United States will pursue a balanced agenda across all three pillars. We will seek to ensure that International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards remain effective and robust and to uphold the Treaty's integrity by addressing non-compliance. We will detail our strong record on nuclear disarmament, our commitment to pursue further steps towards that goal, and our leading role in promoting peaceful nuclear energy.

In the realm of disarmament, a central focus of this Commission, I would like to take a few moments to highlight some very positive recent developments that we believe will further the common global effort to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

The sixth meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on implementing the NPT was held in London from 4 to 5 February. The United States thanks the United Kingdom for hosting this very successful event. As the final statement of the conference noted, in reaffirming their commitment towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT, the P-5 reflected on the contribution that the P-5 process has made in developing the mutual confidence and transparency among the P-5 that is essential to making progress towards multilateral nuclear disarmament.

The dialogue among the P-5 at high political and expert levels continues to increase transparency and confidence-building. The P-5 process illustrates our collective commitment to addressing challenges to the NPT and advancing shared NPT objectives. This is an important collaborative process, creating opportunities for increased technical and cooperative engagement. Future P-5 multilateral negotiations will build on the interaction, cooperation and trust-building that is happening now.

In Prague in December 2014, Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller announced a new initiative by the United States to form an international partnership for nuclear-disarmament verification. The partnership will provide a means to pursue technical work relating to nuclear disarmament goals. The United States was pleased to host the kick-off plenary meeting of the partnership from 19 to 20 March, in Washington, D.C. Officials from 26 States participated, including both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. The United States launched the initiative in concert with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). We believe that NTI's rich experience, including its recent project on innovating verification, will be a valuable contribution to this effort.

The principal goals of the partnership are, first, to build international capacity among States with and without nuclear weapons; secondly, to improve and broaden the understanding of the challenges inherent in nuclear-disarmament verification and monitoring; and, thirdly, to provide international leadership by facilitating technical progress towards meeting

these challenges. The work of the partnership will be technical in nature and led by technical experts.

This exciting and ambitious new endeavour will address these goals through dialogue among officials and experts from the participating countries as well as independent technical experts. It will be a long-term process. We made good progress in our first meeting; we had a good, open discussion on potential areas of interest and collaboration. We believe such cooperation will promote increased international understanding of, and confidence in, the monitoring and verification of future nuclear arms-control and disarmament agreements. All have an interest in the success of these efforts. We look forward to continuing partnership efforts and thank Norway for agreeing to host the next plenary meeting in Oslo this fall.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the next logical step on the multilateral nuclear-disarmament agenda. It would establish a cap on fissile material available for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The United States has not produced highly enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons since 1964 and has not produced plutonium for use in nuclear weapons since 1989. We are committed to maintaining this moratorium on fissile-material production and encourage other States to maintain or adopt such moratoriums. The United States continues to seek the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT, and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains our preferred venue.

The recent discussions of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT were the most substantive in years. It is our hope that the Group's final report will motivate and revitalize the dialogue on the FMCT within the CD, helping to remove the blockage in negotiations there. Our expert worked to ensure that the Group's final report not only reflects the full range of issues discussed, but also the full range of expert views on those issues, as envisioned in the Shannon report (CD/1299). The Shannon report captures the one element on which all agree — the need to ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. All else should be the subject of consensus negotiations in the CD, and it is high time for the CD to get on with it.

With regard to the UNDC's agenda, we have noted in this Commission since April 2014 that outer space transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are an ideal topic for in-depth consideration as part of the Commission's agenda for the 2015-2017 issue cycle. Many other Member States assembled here today have expressed similar support for including such an item on the UNDC's agenda.

The United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. In this regard, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor with Russia and China resolutions 68/50 and 69/38. Both resolutions refer the recommendations contained in the 2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) to the UNDC for consideration. Both resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly without a vote. Resolution 69/38 also calls for a joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability.

In addition to the current agenda items "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the United States believes the Commission should establish a third agenda item, "Recommendations for the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", in furtherance of previous General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 69/77.

A UNDC working group on outer space TCBMs should take into account discussions on this topic in the Conference on Disarmament, and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which also received the Group of Governmental Experts' report for consideration. These discussions include consideration by the Committee of relevant aspects of A/68/189 during its fifty-eighth session this June in Vienna. When Member States agree to add the topic of outer space TCBMs to the Commission's agenda, this development could be noted at the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees scheduled for this October here in New York.

Mr. Chair, as we work to finalize full agreement on the Commission's agenda for the 2015-2017 issue cycle, I would like to express my confidence in your ability to foster continuing consultations on developing

a consensus agenda emblematic of Member States' priorities, in particular with regard to outer space TCBMs. The United States looks forward to addressing the issues before the Commission in the coming years, offers the Chairs of the respective Working Groups its best wishes, and will do its part to facilitate a positive outcome.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): Mr. Chair, at the outset, I wish to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for this year's substantive session. I am sure, Sir, that your able stewardship will guide us through our deliberations for the next three weeks to achieve fruitful outcomes, and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I would like to take this opportunity to also express my deep appreciation to Ms. Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her tireless efforts and crucial contributions in advancing the United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation agenda over the past three years.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War as well as the establishment of the United Nations. Over the decades, the disarmament machinery of the United Nations has played a central role in achieving important milestones in disarmament. While the need for further progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever today, it is regrettable that the United Nations disarmament bodies, including this Commission, have long ceased to function as an effective platform to advance our agenda. If this impasse continues, the Commission will lose its relevance, and soon its very foundation will be called into question. As the new triennial cycle begins, we must act with an ever greater sense of urgency to bring the work of the Commission back on track.

This year's substantive session of the UNDC is occurring in a dynamic environment. The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will commence in just three weeks' time. Last week, the five plus one group (P-5+1) and the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed on a framework which would establish an important foundation for the resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. The Group of Governmental Experts has reached an agreement on its recommendations for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has entered into force, and its first Conference of States Parties will take place in a few months' time.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its conviction that the NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope that based on a balanced approach to the three pillars of the NPT, this year's Review Conference will contribute to a further strengthening of the NPT regime and the implementation of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. The Commission should seize this opportunity to engage in constructive discussions that focus on common denominators rather than differences, and exert every effort to produce a meaningful outcome.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the political framework agreed by the P5+1 and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2 April. The Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that, based on this crucial step, the negotiating parties will soon reach a complete, comprehensive resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. We once again express our full support for the negotiation process and hope that a peaceful, negotiated resolution of Iran's nuclear issue will set a positive precedent for addressing other critical security challenges in the world.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty last year was indeed an encouraging development. This substantive session should seize on this unique momentum to work towards specific recommendations on bolstering confidence-building mechanisms for conventional arms. Continued efforts to achieve universality of the ATT should be an essential step in this regard.

Even as the international community is taking joint steps toward the shared goal of disarmament, the North Korean nuclear issue continues to pose a grave challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world that has conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century, and is continuing, even as we speak, to advance its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities in clear violation of its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

The international community has been clear and consistent in its position that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-

weapon State in accordance with the NPT under any circumstances. We once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in compliance with its international obligations, including those under the relevant Security Council resolutions. We hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will promptly return to a meaningful dialogue on its nuclear issue with a sincere attitude and commitment towards denuclearization.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my sincere hope that the Commission will emerge from the prolonged deadlock to once again serve as a valuable platform for adopting concrete guidelines and recommendations in the field of disarmament. This is a task that requires all of us to work together in a spirit of compromise and shared responsibility. We look forward to constructive discussions over the next three weeks.

Mr. Ceylan (Turkey): Mr. Chair, I would like to begin by congratulating you, the Bureau members and Chairs of the Working Groups for your election and wish you all success in your efforts to steer the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in its new substantive session. I also want to thank Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia for his dedicated chairmanship in the previous substantive session and for his facilitating role in the organization of the current one. My delegation is fully aware of the challenging task that you have assumed, Mr. Chair, and therefore reiterates its readiness to work closely with you and the Bureau in order to achieve a successful outcome by the end of the present session.

As we are all well aware, the UNDC, which was established as the main specialized deliberative body on disarmament affairs by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, has been deadlocked for nearly 16 years. Our shared aim should therefore be to find ways and means to enable it to once again formulate consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on disarmament, as it did long ago.

In every substantive session in which we have failed to make a consensus recommendation to the General Assembly, the UNDC's credibility and relevance within the United Nations disarmament machinery erodes. Over the years, that has become a critical impediment to taking disarmament affairs forward. However, in the face of the current security circumstances — with shaky geopolitics and overwhelming challenges on the one hand, but also with new opportunities on the other, such as the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the recent important breakthrough in nuclear negotiations with Iran — and bearing in mind civil society's increasing role and the emerging trends in nuclear disarmament, the UNDC must now regain its designated role and carry out its mandate without further ado.

That will undoubtedly depend on the extent to which we can show flexibility in a collective fashion, and we are therefore happy to see that after long consultations we have finally come up with an agenda for the new triennial cycle in line with General Assembly resolution 69/77. The two items on the agenda will enable us to focus in the new cycle on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as on confidence-building measures on conventional arms. We believe that a constructive approach is essential to success. When we look at the impasses that have put obstacles in the way of the Disarmament Commission, we can see that declaratory stances that are too static and a lack of flexibility are among the main reasons for the current deadlock.

Achieving tangible results in the UNDC requires that we address issues at the core of its agenda, so I would like to emphasize my delegation's strong desire to contribute to consensus outcomes in both Working Groups, on nuclear weapons and non-proliferation and on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We are ready to support any consensus that can emerge in this room. However, if the linkage problem between the Working Groups recurs again, as it did in the last substantive session, it will be useless to secure consensus within one working group. That may render the work of the UNDC a non-starter. My delegation therefore supports the idea that the efforts of each Working Group should be treated separately, since otherwise our search for ways and means to advance the Commission's work through practical measures, such as the inclusion of a third agenda item, will yield no results either.

Today we can talk about a new state of affairs in international peace and security. We cannot completely understand those new circumstances without paying due attention to the issue of complexity. While all security threats are now in some way interrelated, each has different underlying dynamics, and disarmament,

as a fundamental issue of security, cannot be detached from that complex environment. The concept of security today is not merely the realm of States, defending peace and security for their peoples who strive for them. We recognize the role of civil society in that regard. We want disarmament for our peoples and our future generations. We are aware of the growing interest in the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. Turkey has participated in the three conferences held so far on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

However, it is not just nuclear weapons but also chemical, biological and every other type of weapon that have humanitarian consequences. Unfortunately, and regrettably, we have witnessed that stark reality with every chlorine attack by the regime's forces that has occurred in Syria. Such realities should not be disregarded when we are dealing with issues of major significance for world peace. Turkey therefore expects that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will investigate the recent incidents, while the Security Council ensures that its own related resolutions, 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), will help to hold those responsible for these attacks to account. However, as a forum for discussion, the UNDC also plays a role in this and should take the issue into consideration in its future deliberations.

In the wake of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a breakthrough in the Disarmament Commission would be an encouraging signal for our ultimate goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We should therefore seize the opportunity of last week's agreement between Iran and the P5+1 countries on Iran's nuclear programme, and draw the necessary lessons for our Commission's work. Turkey, a staunch advocate of the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conformity with the rules and norms set out by the International Atomic Energy Agency, has supported those negotiations from the outset, and is now happy to see that a general, practical political framework for a comprehensive deal on the nuclear issue may be achieved.

Turkey has actively supported and contributed substantially to the diplomatic efforts since our non-permanent membership of the Security Council in 2009 and 2010, and we played a crucial role in the Tehran Joint Declaration back in 2010. We view diplomacy as the only option for solving the problem of Iran's nuclear programme and have actively supported the work being done to arrive at a peaceful solution. We hope that the new comprehensive political framework agreement will be completed with the necessary technical details by the end of June and thoroughly implemented in the years ahead. We expect to see positive results from the agreement in our region, in line with the general principle of undiminished security for all.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express our full support to you, Mr. Chair, and to the Bureau members.

Mr. Fukahori (Japan): At the outset, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as to the newly elected members of the Bureau, and to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Commission was once renowned as the leading deliberative United Nations body in the field of disarmament, while the Conference on Disarmament (CD) was established in Geneva as the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. However, both have failed to fulfil their mandates. Although in the past the UNDC adopted 16 consensus documents on guidelines and recommendations, including the well-known guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it has now remained in deadlock for about 15 years, and last year it again failed to come up with a consensus document that could lead us towards further disarmament. Although Japan will continue to participate actively in the Commission, all of us here should be aware that its inability to produce a substantive outcome has put its raison d'être into serious question, and we should cooperate in order to find a way to revitalize its work.

This year marks 70 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will begin on 27 April. As the only country ever to have suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan has long been committed to pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons, and thus believes it will be important to achieve a concrete outcome at the upcoming Review Conference.

There can be no doubt that a world free of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved without cooperation between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

All of us should cooperate to advance practical and effective measures aimed at realizing our long-term vision. Japan, together with other member States of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), has submitted 19 practical proposals to the Secretariat of the Review Conference, including a comprehensive proposal derived from the Hiroshima statement adopted at the NPDI's ministerial meeting in April 2014. We strongly believe that our proposal provides a good basis for a consensus at the upcoming Review Conference and hope to gain support from States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPDI's proposal calls on both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States to take concrete action, and it covers a wide range of issues. With regard to disarmament, our Government particularly stresses the importance of the following three points. First, nuclear-weapon States should ensure the transparency of their nuclear force as a premise for disarmament. Transparency also contributes to building confidence and thus improves the security environment. Secondly, nuclear-weapon States should reduce all their types of nuclear weapons and should eventually begin multilateral nuclear-weapon reduction negotiations. And thirdly, nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States should unite in order to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons, based on discussions of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

As the only country to have ever suffered nuclear bombings in war, Japan understands and is familiar with the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. We have therefore proactively contributed to discussions on the issue. I would like to reiterate that a clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins all nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Discussion of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should therefore be inclusive and open to all States striving for a world free of nuclear weapons, so that the humanitarian aspect of disarmament can function as a driving force for our efforts. In that context, I encourage all my colleagues to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to better understand the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of atomic bombings, and I also urge them to visit the permanent exhibition on the atomic bombings here at the United Nations. It is my sincere hope that the upcoming NPT Review Conference will take a step forward towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Addressing the enormous damage caused by conventional arms continues to be extremely important to the international community and is an area in which United Nations leadership is needed. Japan has been supportive of a greater role for the United Nations in the field since we proposed the establishment of a United Nations register for conventional arms. In that regard, I would like to mention two significant challenges that States Members of the United Nations will have to confront in the coming months.

First, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force last year. It is very important to ensure that the Treaty is effectively implemented and universally recognized. We would like to encourage all Member States to become parties to the ATT. As one of the original authors of General Assembly resolution 61/89, which initiated the ATT process, Japan will continue to work hard with other Member States and civil society to achieve the Treaty's effective implementation.

Secondly, the 2015 Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will be an important opportunity to advance United Nations efforts to tackle the enduring problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Based on the recommendation of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action, we are expecting to discuss recent developments in technologies, the effectiveness of national marking, record-keeping and tracing systems, technology transfer and capacity-building for implementing the Programme of Action and the Customs Convention on the International Transit of Goods. Japan commends Ambassador Lupan, Chair-designate of the Open-Ended Meeting, for the transparent and efficient manner in which he has been conducting the preparatory work towards the Conference in June. Japan will continue to work actively to achieve a successful outcome at the Open-Ended Meeting.

Despite the lack of progress within the United Nations disarmament machinery, there is still hope. For example, last week in Geneva the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, established by a General Assembly resolution

in 2012 (67/53), completed their substantive work. I am confident that the work has enabled experts to engage in substantive discussions on various aspects of a future fissile material cut-off treaty, thus providing signposts that can help guide future negotiations for such a treaty.

In order to have a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the aforementioned Group of Governmental Experts, now is the time for us to consider how we can revitalize the UNDC so that it can produce useful guidelines and recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation in accordance with its original mandate. To that end, Japan will continue to provide all the support it can to the Chair and to contribute to productive deliberations in this important body.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since today's meeting is part of the general debate, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your chairship of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his efforts as Chair during the Commission's previous session. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups, and I would like to reiterate our support for the Commission's efforts.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Groups of African and Arab States.

(*spoke in English*)

This year is a particularly important one for the UNDC, since it begins a new cycle. A successful outcome will require consensus on the issues discussed by the two Working Groups, that is, recommendations for achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. A consensus substantive outcome is extremely important if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC to the multilateral disarmament machinery, especially given the successive failure since 1999 of past cycles of the Commission to adopt an outcome. In that regard, we particularly urge the nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters in their respective areas covered by Working Groups I and II, to display the political will needed to reach a substantive result on the two important issues that are before us on the Commission's agenda, in order to realize the UNDC's potential in furthering the cause of disarmament.

The way the agenda was arrived at this morning gives us an opportunity to further refine the issues as we proceed through the three years of the cycle, in order to facilitate our task of reaching substantive recommendations on the two topics on our agenda. We thank you, Sir, for the way you framed things as a reference to the relevant General Assembly resolution 69/77, which should guide our work so that we can further refine and arrive at specific, concrete recommendations, particularly on nuclear disarmament, which remains the international community's priority, as per the Assembly's first special session on disarmament.

Focusing specifically on the agenda for Working Group I, we believe that our starting point in that regard should be the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/58, on the follow-up to the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament held on 26 September 2013. The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and the UNDC should be ready to contribute its part to the deliberations on the implementation of that road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons, and to provide for their full destruction.

In this regard, Egypt welcomes the continued momentum in reviving the international debate on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their use with international humanitarian law. We support the calls that reverberated in the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, and nuclear-weapon States bear a special responsibility for avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

Related to this, the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an indispensable step towards the achievement of general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has recognized the urgency in particular of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear

weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite these repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of the zone, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote and which enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, remains unfulfilled. Yet it remains valid until its objectives are achieved and, hence, should be implemented without any further delay.

The UNDC provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to bringing the process back on track. It provides us an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate and restore the credibility and relevance of the NPT review process, if not the Treaty itself. Particularly timely are the meetings of the UNDC this year a few weeks before the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The deliberations of the Working Group II of the UNDC on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons also assumed a growing importance. By contributing to a debate on confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be helping to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the salient issue of small arms and light weapons. We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures.

First, the overproduction of and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers must be subjected to international scrutiny. More than at any time in history, the stockpiling and production of these weapons make the world less secure, and that undermines confidence. It is up to the UNDC to address this issue in this session and in this cycle.

Secondly, mutual international accountability, as the only guarantee against the potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world, is necessary.

Thirdly, protracted threats to international peace and security must be addressed. In this regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crime of aggression and foreign occupation that employ conventional armed arsenals to threaten and dominate people and deny them their most basic human rights. By developing such confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be refining the traditional meaning of the term, thus contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability.

Egypt stands ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations of the Commission to ensure a balanced outcome between the results of the two Working Groups — an outcome that reflects the interests of all States. We are confident in your ability, Mr. Chair, to steer the discussions towards a successful outcome of not only the session, but of the cycle as a whole.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker in the general exchange of views today.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to the statement made by the representative of South Korea.

As the representative of South Korea has pointed out, we possess nuclear weapons as nuclear deterrents, and we have to continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen these deterrents. We developed nuclear weapons not because we wanted to have them, but because an external condition compelled my country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to possess them. That external condition was and is the hostile policy of the United States towards my country. The United States wants to destroy my country and its ideals and systems by nuclear threats. In order to deal with that, we were compelled to possess nuclear weapons.

As long as the hostile policy of the United States, which has recently been manifested by the open announcement by President Obama that North Korea should be toppled, continues, we cannot give up nuclear weapons. Our nuclear weapons are meant to safeguard the Korean nation and the Korean peninsula and to defend peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The representative of South Korea is now talking about the nuclear problem, but at the same time

large-scale war exercises, which are unprecedented in their nature and scale, are being carried out in South Korea with the United States. I want to clearly point out that we were compelled to possess nuclear weapons in the face of the hostile policy of the United States for the good of our nation. There is no reason for the South Korean Government to be uncomfortable with our nuclear deterrent unless it adheres to the United States' hostile policy in a humiliating manner.

I will elaborate our position further through our statement tomorrow in the general debate.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): I am sorry to take the floor at this late time, but I have to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to exercise my right of reply.

As the Disarmament Commission knows, under relevant Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, North Korea is obliged to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. North Korea must fully understand that it cannot obtain anything by developing its nuclear programme and continuing its provocative acts.

The representative of North Korea mentioned our joint military exercises, but I would like to clarify that the Republic of Korea-United States joint exercises have been conducted annually for several decades to respond to the clear and existing military threat of North Korea and are purely defensive in nature. These exercises have been conducted in a transparent manner, with advance notification provided to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and under the observation of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

North Korea has continued to violate Security Council resolutions by carrying out three nuclear tests, four long-range ballistic missile tests, as well as multiple short- and mid-range ballistic-missile launches. The sinking of the Republic of Korea's navel vessel, the Cheonan, and the launching of the artillery attack on Yeonpyeong island by North Korea in 2010 also demonstrate the existence of a persistent and clear military threat from the north.

The facts speak for themselves. It is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has not only created, but also escalated, tensions in the region.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am sorry to ask you, Mr. Chair, for the floor again. I have many things to say in response to the representative of South Korea. It would take one or two days to say everything I have to say, but we are not here in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for that purpose.

I think the representative of South Korea has some wrong ideas about the way forward. He appears to be trying to change the nature of our work at the UNDC. I do not want to go into details or engage in lengthy explanations to the representative of South Korea, but I want to say that his statements are not acceptable and cannot fly.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): I am sorry to take the floor once again. I just want to point out one thing. If North Korea makes a strategic decision to abandon its nuclear programmes, we are prepared to cooperate with the international community to fully help North Korea to participate in the global economy and develop peacefully. We hope that North Korea moves in this direction.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.349

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

349th meeting

Wednesday, 8 April 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chair: Before the Commission proceeds to hear from delegations in the general debate, I would like to bring the attention of members to the schedule of meetings as set out in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.1, which has been distributed in the room. As members of the Commission will recall, the schedule is based on the practice of previous years, whereby we allocate the number of meetings for each Working Group on an equitable basis. Nine meetings will be allocated for each Working Group this year.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the schedule of meetings as set out in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.1?

It was so decided.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair: The Commission will now continue its general debate by turning to the list of speakers inscribed for the debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible. So as to maximize the time available to us during the general debate, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that have already been inscribed on the list to keep in mind that the rolling list implies that they should be prepared to take the floor at any time, possibly even sooner than they had originally planned to speak. I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in a national capacity.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Ambassador Fodé Seck, for his leadership in organizing the general debate, and to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her statement two days ago (see A/CN.10/PV.344), which significantly contributed to the constructive and comprehensive nature of our deliberations today. I assure you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat, of the full support of the Georgian delegation in order for this session to reach a successful outcome.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their related materials and technologies and the risk of nuclear terrorism represent a serious threat to human security. The problem is global and asymmetrical in its nature, and requires a high level of coordination and cooperation both regionally and internationally. In that regard, full compliance with the obligations under the relevant international arrangements — such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) — should be emphasized as one of the international community's main priorities.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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Georgia continues to consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and we believe that the credibility of the NPT lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars. We also hope that one of the most important events in the 2015 disarmament calendar, the NPT Review Conference, will be successful. That success depends upon us and on our will to act and deliberate in a constructive manner without any double standards. For its part, Georgia is strongly committed to working constructively towards a positive outcome.

In that context, it is with great pleasure that I note that, in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Government of Georgia organized a side event on 29 October 2014 entitled "Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) National Action Plans: Meeting the Challenges of International Security". Georgia is the first country to have adopted such a plan. We plan to organize similar events with our partners in future.

We regret that an important component of the international security machinery, namely, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), continues to fail to fulfil its mandate in an effective manner. Undoubtedly, the CD should exercise a significantly greater influence and produce a larger impact in the field of its competency, especially in view of the deteriorating international security environment. To achieve that goal, we all should spare no effort in promoting the revitalization of that unique negotiations forum, which played a crucial role in bringing about several major international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

In recent years, there have been many discussions about the inadequacy of existing security arrangements to respond to twenty-first century requirements. We share that view, in part. However, taking into account the universal nature of the fundamental principles upon which the security architecture rests, we believe that the main problem is more a question of the unwillingness of certain countries to strictly comply with their obligations, rather than of the imperfection of the system itself. In certain cases, non-compliance can irreversibly erode the current security system and produce undesired large-scale negative implications, which is exactly what we are witnessing today.

Security assurances provided to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum in connection with its accession to the NPT have been ignored, and the Russian Federation — one of the guarantor States — has openly challenged Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is an extremely dangerous development that threatens to have, inter alia, far-reaching negative implications for the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process. The ongoing occupation of Ukrainian territories where nuclear facilities and materials are located and the lack of legitimate control are additional challenges to the international security.

The Ukrainian case is not the only case in which Russia remains in serious material breach of the Charter of the United Nations and other treaties under international law. In August 2008, the Russian Federation launched a large-scale military campaign against Georgia, which resulted in the occupation of more than 20 per cent of Georgian territory. The occupation of our sovereign territory, in violation of the six-point ceasefire agreement of August 2008, no doubt represents a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, since it creates fertile ground for all sorts of illegal activities, including the proliferation and accumulation of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials and illicit transfers of conventional arms. In that regard, I would like to remind the Commission that there have been several documented attempts of nuclear smuggling via the occupied Georgian regions, of which the international community has been duly informed.

Currently, there are approximately 12,000 Russian occupation troops stationed illegally in Georgia. In addition to the personnel build-up, Russia has fortified its military infrastructure in the occupied territories and deployed additional equipment to its military bases. The Russian infrastructure and equipment includes military and naval bases, airfields, offensive weaponry such as tanks, armoured personnel carriers, Grad weapons, surface-to-air missile systems, multiple-launch rocket systems — so-called Smerch units — self-propelled howitzers, air defence systems and the tactical operational missile launch system Scarab B, also known as Tochka U, which can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear warheads. In addition to the establishment of military bases, Russia is refurbishing and developing new transport infrastructure in the occupied Georgian territories that will allow Moscow to move its forces and hardware more rapidly.

Despite the direct call of the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement to withdraw to the pre-war positions, over the years the Russian military forces have expanded the occupation zone and installed barbed wire fences and other artificial obstacles along the occupation line to hinder, inter alia, people-to-people contact and movement in both directions. The military build-up will further intensify as a result of the implementation of the so-called treaties on alliance and integration, signed between Moscow and its occupation regimes in Georgian territories. These documents represent a further step towards the de facto annexation of our regions.

When it comes to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, what the Russian Federation needs to do without any further delay is fully to comply with its obligations under the United Nations Charter, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe arrangements, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and with the commitments it undertook when it signed the Budapest Memorandum and the August 2008 ceasefire agreement — all of which require the Russian Federation to end its illegal occupation of sovereign territories in Georgia and Ukraine.

In conclusion, I would like to note that is clear that nothing is ever perfect, including the security architecture. However, bearing in mind the universality of its fundamental principles, we must admit that the existing system has not exhausted its potential to further facilitate and strengthen security and stability. But firm political will and readiness to comply with international law are needed. Otherwise, the process of erosion will become irreversible and irretrievably undermine the existing security architecture.

Mr. Garrido (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to wish you every success in the work this year. I would also like to express our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively to the outcome of the deliberations. I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and express our thanks for the outstanding work led by Ms. Angela Kane at the helm of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We also wish to align ourselves with statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Ecuador on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would now like to add some specific considerations and insights from the perspective of the delegation of Chile.

Chile is, and always has been, a strong supporter and promoter of general and complete disarmament and, in line with its foreign policy, favours debate in a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral space. This approach is clearly expressed in Chile's active participation in disarmament and international security forums at the regional and global level. My country firmly believes in the principle of indivisibility of the international security, that is, that all States, regardless of their size or power, have a shared responsibility to contribute to the strengthening of a rules- and cooperation-based international order.

We support the proposal that this forum hold a more focused discussion that is able to accurately identify elements in the field of disarmament that allow us to fully carry our task of generating recommendations and to leave behind 15 years of stagnation. The Disarmament Commission has not escaped the crisis facing the disarmament machinery, which, operating under the most extreme version of the consensus rule, has amplified that tool's perennial meaning and scope as a generator of dialogue and developer of comprehensive agreements.

A goal that is very important for Chile is the democratization of international organizations, the democratization of multilateral practice. To achieve it, we must add voices that are missing in this debate. Civil society is expected to play a major role in disarmament issues, leaving behind procedural constraints and demanding more accountability and transparency from State actors. Public opinion demands concrete results from us.

For Chile, nuclear disarmament is, in the context of weapons of mass destruction, the most pressing task for its unparalleled capacity for destruction that compromises the very existence of humankind, and therefore their inclusion in the discussions in this forum is fundamental. We would have liked to have agreed a more targeted approach to address this issue.

In addition, we note that in recent years we have been successful in strengthening and advancing instruments that regulate the field of conventional arms, represent significant progress in international humanitarian law

and are a clear expression of the concept of human security that puts humans at the centre of our work. We therefore also consider it important to mainstream practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

We are not naive, and we know that lack of political will is what has prevented us from moving forward in recent years. Nevertheless, we would have liked to see a third item added to the agenda as a way of introducing into the debate new and pressing issues in the field of disarmament and international security, and injecting flexibility in a system that has been made rigid by an inevitable linkage between two topics that influence each other.

In conclusion, I would like to make an appeal to all delegations to take a pragmatic approach and behave with maximum flexibility at the beginning of a new cycle in the work of the Commission, for the purpose of achieving concrete results. To do that, Mr. Chair, you can count on the commitment and cooperation of our delegation.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you once again, Mr. Chair, on your election. I also congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chairs. I wish you, Sir, a productive session and assure you that you can count on our full support.

This year we begin a new three-year cycle of the Disarmament Commission, which should allow us to overcome the impasse in which we have remained for too many years. In this new cycle, we must go the extra mile and adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach that allows us to get out of an immobility that we cannot afford. It is necessary to find areas of consensus, with the determination to reach agreements.

The ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will begin here on 27 April. Spain hopes that the Conference will serve to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and we hope that it will enable us to move forward in a balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

To achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, which is our goal, we must demand gradual cuts from States possessing nuclear weapons and that they implement measures of trust and transparency. We therefore call upon those States, especially those with larger arsenals, to continue negotiations on disarmament. In that regard, we greatly appreciate the proposal by the United States to reduce strategic arsenals beyond the threshold established in the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Similarly, we appeal to the eight States listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to sign and ratify it in order to facilitate its immediate entry into force. We also advocate for the progressive reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategies. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States respect their commitment not to use or threaten to use their nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and we ask that States that have not yet undertaken that commitment take steps to do so as soon as possible.

Spain also supports the mandate set out in document CD/1299 for the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. The mandate is flexible and does not exclude any negotiating options, so that the process can begin without prejudging the conduct or final results of the negotiations. Meanwhile, we encourage States that have not yet done so to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material as proof of their commitment.

Spain supports the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, as they represent another step closer to the ultimate goal of complete disarmament. In that regard, we regret that we have still not been able to hold a conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that it will take place as soon as possible and that the sense of responsibility among all concerned will help to make it successful.

Spain also attaches great importance to the humanitarian aspect of the preamble to the NPT and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, concerning the devastating consequences of a nuclear detonation. That is a matter of great interest and one that we feel we should respond to pragmatically through a process of gradual nuclear disarmament, and therefore an issue that is very relevant to this session of the Disarmament Commission.

One important goal that we should foster is ensuring the continued maintenance of outer space as a safe and stable environment, and its peaceful use on a equitable and multilaterally accepted basis. We

should therefore promote measures that encourage trust and transparency, including the adoption of a code of conduct.

We should not forget other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. Spain is closely following the successful chemical disarmament process in Syria being jointly conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations. However, despite the progress that has been made in implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), some very worrying issues remain. We therefore support the OPCW's efforts to investigate the attacks in which chlorine was used as a chemical weapon last year and possibly in recent weeks as well.

With regard to biological weapons, 2015 will see the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the prelude to its eighth Review Conference, to be held in 2016. Spain would like to highlight the steps that have been taken towards universalizing the Convention, to which 172 States are already party, and welcomes the progress that has been made in its implementation at the national level, in the related science and technology and in implementing measures of trust and cooperation.

I would like to make a positive point here on the reasons for satisfaction in the area of conventional arms. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, on 24 December, is a triumph that enables conventional arms exports to be tied to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in the countries to which they are exported. Spain has been an active contributor to the process; we were one of the first States to sign and ratify the Treaty, and we made the decision to implement it provisionally as soon as we signed. We have also participated in numerous bilateral and multilateral activities designed to promote its effective implementation. The good pace of ratification, with 50 States ratifying the Treaty in a short period, shows that it is still possible to make substantial progress in the area of disarmament.

Spain also considers the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to be a serious threat to peace and security, as well as to development, since it is linked to armed conflict, transnational organized crime and terrorism. We therefore welcome the consensus reached during the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2117 (2013).

I cannot conclude without mentioning how essential it is to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorist groups. We stress how important it is that all States comply with their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009). Spain, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), is designing a strategy for implementing it that will be presented in 2016 at the comprehensive review of the resolution planned for that year. We hope we can rely on the active participation of all Member States throughout the review process. The challenges facing us are alarming and our determination to address them must not falter.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairship of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I am confident that your wealth of diplomatic experience and wisdom will help lead this session to positive results. The Chinese delegation would like to assure you of its full cooperation, and to congratulate Kazakhstan and Morocco on their elections as Chairs of the Working Groups.

The trend of our times has been the pursuit of peace, development and win-win cooperation. Yet meanwhile we are faced with more cross-cutting international security challenges than ever before. Maintaining international security remains an arduous task. In these new circumstances, all countries should abandon a Cold War mentality and zero-sum game theory and instead foster a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, advance global security governance in a coordinated way, and develop a new and win-win approach to security that is built, shared and maintained by all.

China stands for the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons. We are firmly committed to a nuclear policy based on self-defence and have upheld our commitment to not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, or to use or threaten to use nuclear

weapons unconditionally against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has exercised the utmost restraint in the scale and development of its nuclear arsenal and has never participated in any kind of nuclear arms race. We will continue to keep our nuclear force at the minimum level required for national security.

China is of the view that it is important to actively pursue the international nuclear disarmament process on the basiss of the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take the lead in reducing them drastically and substantively. China supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, is committed to pushing for its early entry into force and will continue to honour its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing. China hopes that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will reach consensus on its programme of work as soon as possible so that it can start its substantive work, including negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty.

China firmly opposes nuclear proliferation, supports the consolidation and improvement of the international non-proliferation regime and seeks the peaceful settlement of regional nuclear issues through dialogue and negotiation. We welcome the key parameters of the joint comprehensive plan of action recently reached by P5+1 and Iran in Lausanne. China contributed positively to resolving the difficult issues and sticking points in the negotiations, and is prepared to work with other relevant parties to reach a mutually beneficial comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme as soon as possible. The P5+1 talks constitute a viable and effective mechanism to push forward the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and maintain peace and stability. China will continue to engage in dialogue with all the relevant parties to address the concerns of all in a balanced manner, with a view to easing current tensions and creating and consolidating the conditions conducive to the earliest possible resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

China has always and continues to respect and support the efforts of the non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. Last year, together with the other four nuclear-weapon States, China signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. The Chinese Government has submitted a relevant proposal to the National People's Congress for deliberation. China has resolved all pending issues with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on a protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in South-East Asia and is ready to sign that protocol. China supports the early convening of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of great significance. All parties should seize that opportunity to promote the purposes and objectives of the Treaty in a comprehensive and balanced manner, and crown the conference with substantive achievements. China will submit is national report to the Review Conference. Thanks to the combined efforts of all involved, the P-5 working group on the glossary of key nuclear terms, led by China, has reached preliminary agreement on the glossary, which will be submitted to the Review Conference.

It is in the interest of all countries to maintain peace and prevent an arms race in outer space. Lasting peace and security in outer space can be truly realized only through the negotiation of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In June 2014, based upon the new security landscape in outer space and various stakeholders' suggestions, China and the Russian Federation submitted an updated version of the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which had been jointly submitted by the two countries in 2008. China welcomes comments and suggestions from all parties, preferably in written form, to collectively improve the draft.

China has always supported practical and feasible confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms control, and has made continuous efforts to promote international and regional disarmament processes. China has devoted itself to transparency and confidence-building in the field of conventional arms control, and has been an active participant in both the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. In 2013, the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms reviewed the Register.

China believes that one of the most pressing tasks is to improve the universality of the Register, that is, to increase the number of participating countries.

China attaches great importance to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and has been earnestly implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, China has adopted a series of measures on legislation, law enforcement, capacity building, international exchange and cooperation, with remarkable results. China constructively participated in a fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action last year, and hopes that the open-ended meeting of governmental experts to be held this June will bring about a positive outcome.

China supports the international community's efforts to take the measures necessary to regulate the international trade in conventional arms and to combat the illicit transfer and trafficking of conventional arms. China has constructively participated in the Arms Trade Treaty negotiation process, and is currently looking into the issue of acceding to that Treaty. China is ready to strengthen cooperation with all parties with a view to establishing a regulated and reasonable arms trade order.

China attaches great importance to and actively participates in the ongoing discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems. We are of the view that the international community should study the matter thoroughly and properly address the relevant concerns on the basis of comprehensive and inclusive discussions.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. The multilateral disarmament machinery established after the Second World War has made tremendous contributions to safeguarding world peace and security. As one of the deliberative bodies under the United Nations framework, the UNDC has played an important role in setting priority areas for multilateral disarmament negotiations. In recent years, the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the UNDC, has been progressing very slowly. China hopes that every party will take a rational and practical attitude towards the status and role of the UNDC, conduct work in a positive and pragmatic manner and bridge gaps in order to make positive progress during this round of review.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to lead the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We would like to endorse the statements delivered by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.344). We would, however, like to offer some comments on the work of the Commission in our national capacity.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Disarmament Commission, the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Commission affords us an opportunity to discuss specific issues with a view to presenting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. We hope that this new cycle will provide fresh impetus to this important body, and will enable us to move beyond the political impasse that made it impossible to adopt recommendations for over a decade. We must continue to pursue the objective of producing consensus recommendations while taking inspiration from what the Disarmament Commission has achieved in the past, which the reason behind our continued belief in the unity of the Commission.

With only a few weeks until the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and faced with a situation that is far from encouraging, we welcomed the news of the agreement reached between the E3+3 and the Islamic Republic of Iran. After several years of complex and delicate negotiations, this is a great milestone, not only for diplomacy but also for the global regime for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, when it comes to nuclear disarmament, there are no similar results that elicit the same level of optimism.

The imbalance between non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament represents the greatest challenge that we have to face, not only in the framework of the NPT but also within the disarmament machinery. That imbalance is the underlying cause of the disfunction and paralysis that, unfortunately, has characterized for years the two major bodies of the disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime; it is essential

to achieving nuclear disarmament. However, its continued relevance and effective application depend on equal attention being paid to the three interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As a State party to the Treaty, we are committed to the promotion of its universality and the full compliance with each of its provisions. In the run-up to the NPT Review Conference, it is of great importance that the international community not limit itself to simply reiterating previous commitments, the deadlines of which cannot be extended indefinitely. Non-nuclear-weapon States have clearly fulfilled their part of the commitment. Now it is up to States that possess such weapons to do the same.

Despite all of that, we are encouraged by the renewed interest and dynamism of the international community to make it clear that we will not wait on a small group of nuclear-weapon States to determine when, and if, we will achieve nuclear disarmament. That is why we support the consideration of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the debate in the United Nations. In that regard, the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and, more recently, in Vienna have been instrumental in initiating such a debate. We welcome the endorsement by CELAC member countries of the Austrian Pledge, which was announced at the end of the latest Conference. There can be no doubt that the use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and incompatible with international humanitarian law. In the light of the risk that they represent, it is urgent to adopt a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential component of nuclear disarmament. Guatemala is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely inhabited part of the planet and served as an example and inspiration in the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free regions. That is why my delegation welcomes the holding of the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which will take in April in New York. We also regret that it was not possible to hold the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and we call upon all the States concerned to redouble their efforts to ensure that it can be held as soon as possible. Given the unacceptable risk that the very existence of these weapons poses to humankind, we consider it essential to maintain the moratorium on nuclear tests until the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we believe they are essential tools for relieving and diffusing tensions and avoiding the escalation conflicts and crises between countries. Bearing in mind the current situation, transparency and confidence-building have proven to be valuable tools in multilateralism. It is essential that we move forward in our work so we can see how we can further improve those measures. Recent developments in the field of conventional weapons are encouraging and help to build confidence. The adoption and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument that aims to significantly reduce the human cost of arms proliferation worldwide and prevent arms from being diverted into the illicit market, among other things, represents a genuine milestone in this field.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its follow-up mechanisms. We welcome the success achieved in the latest Review Conference. However, we note with concern the lack of progress during the recently held fifth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, in particular in considering the issue of munitions in the Programme of Action, despite the repetition of this point by a great number of delegations, including ours, and above all because they constitute the essence of the lethal nature of firearms and by them leaving out the consideration of the illicit arms trade is incomplete.

Finally, Guatemala will participate constructively in the work of this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in order to help it carry out its mandate. We hope that the three-year cycle of deliberations that starts this year will substantively address the two items on its agenda as two mutually reinforcing goals.

Mr. AlAjmi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has the pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We also congratulate the other

members of the Bureau. We are confident that your abilities and experience will contribute to the successful outcome of this session and to the formulation of recommendations that reflect the concerns of all Member States.

We associate ourselves with the statement (see A/CN.10/PV.348) delivered by the representative Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation underscores the increasingly important role of multilateral diplomacy, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable means to address disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The UNDC is one of the main pillars in that regard, as it is the sole specialized, deliberative and multilateral body mandated to formulate recommendations on the items on its agenda and to serve as a forum to exchange views and develop intiatives in order to establish effective frameworks in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The UNDC meets today as part of its substantive cycle for this year. We are hopeful that all participating delegations will contribute in order to revive the Commission's previous role and leave behind the stagnation that has lasted for 15 years and to formulate new recommendations with regard to the items on its agenda.

With regard to the first item on its agenda, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", despite seven decades of international multilateral efforts to contain the danger of this destructive and lethal category of weapons, which represent a priority for the United Nations and which embodied the declared objectives of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Commission has never achieved a successful outcome that would allow it to positively affect the mechanisms of multilateral disarmament, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament, where there has been a stalemate for more than two decades and which, like the UNDC, has been been unable to reach consensus on the items on its agenda.

Regional and subregional efforts are crucial to securing the successful outcome of any international endeavour in order to create a better world of peace and security and to enhance cooperation among all nations. The establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are therefore crucial in creating a world free of nuclear weapons. The convening of the current cycle of the Disarmament Commission, in the run-up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, is an important opportunity for the international community to renew its support for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. That noble goal has yet to be realized, despite the calls made at the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences for the establishment of such a zone and the holding of a conference on that issue, which was to be convened in 2012. That goal will be achieved only through the accession of Israel to the NPT and the placement of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the increased attention that has been focused on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We also welcome the outcomes of the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences. It is time that we draft a comprehensive convention that prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons and that provides for their destruction.

With regard to the second item on the agenda, namely "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we wish to underscore the important role that the UNDC guidelines adopted in 1996 play in finding such measures at the regional and international levels. In order to achieve peace and security at the regional and international levels and to increase transparency and dialogue on a voluntary basis, compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is necessary, in particular non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sovereign equality of all Member States, the prohibition of the threat or use of force against any State, the inalienable right of all nations under the yoke of occupation to decide their fate and to reject foreign occupation, and the unlawfulness of occupying other countries or lands and preventing their inhabitants from attaining political independence.

In that connection, I would like to underscore the importance of compliance with all international instruments, including the Convention on Prohibitions or Retrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, as well as the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their

Ammunition and other Related Materials, and the International Tracing Instrument.

In conclusion, we understand that producing recommendations on this year's agenda items would be a great achievement after years without results. We hope that all participating delegations will demonstrate the political will required to successfully meet disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We stand ready to constructively contribute to the deliberations.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for this year's substantive session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I wish everyone every success in their work and I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would like to make comments in my nation's capacity with regard to my country's general views and positions on the work of the Disarmament Commission.

As we are all aware, the UNDC has been in a stalemate for 15 years, during which the Commission has not delivered any results that could contribute to world peace and security. The majority of Member States have made continuous efforts to achieve substantial agreement on the main issues. However, all those efforts have not produced the desired results. Worse, this year's session started without agreement on its agenda items; it was a relief when we were finally able to do so.

As the sole representative deliberative body in the field of disarmament, the UNDC has an important role to play within the United Nations disarmament machinery. Success at the UNDC would have a positive impact on spurring progress in the disarmament machinery as a whole. Therefore, we need to put UNDC back on track. What should be done in order to achieve that? What is the main link in the chain? Which knot should first be untangled before moving on to the others?

My delegation does not think that the main problem lies in procedures or working methods. There is a political obstacle facing the Commission: the existence of political will that is opposed to the UNDC's progress. The UNDC is a multilateral deliberative forum. Multilateral deliberations should be based on a spirit of multilateralism, and said spirit should be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Any form of multilateral deliberation or negotiation will fail if there is insistence upon unilateral policies or such policies are pursued. Like other United Nations forums, the UNDC should not be a place where one side's policies or purposes are pursued. The work of the Commission should not be held hostage to unilateral policy. The arbitrariness and double standards evinced by certain countries, which, against the spirit of multilateral cooperation, infringe upon the security interests of small countries, while treating their own interests as absolute, only bring about mistrust and confrontation, far from trust-based consultations and negotiations. It is hard to foresee a breakthrough in UNDC deliberations unless the pursuit of a unilateral stance and double standards is properly adressed.

If there are any among us who wishes to see the UNDC get back to work, a bold change in that negative political position must take place. My delegation believes that, when each and every member demonstrates the political will necessary to advance the work of the UNDC in the interests of peace and security for all humankind, there will be a real political basis from which the substantial work of the UNDC can be carried out. That is the lesson to be learned from the reality of the Commission, which has yielded no results in the past 15 years. We do not want to see those 15 years repeated.

Nuclear disarmament — one of the keys to guaranteeing peace and security in the world — can now be said to be at a crossroads. Half a century ago, there were intensive debates in United Nations disarmament forums as to the priority between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Because some nuclear-weapon States pledged to strive for nuclear disarmament, the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was made possible.

However, the nuclear disarmament of those nuclear-weapon States did not take place as it had been pledged. Although some bilateral agreements were reached on reducing the number of obsolete nuclear weapons, the modernization of other weapons was in fact accelerated; nuclear threats were even made to non-nuclear-weapon States. The consequences of that began to appear in the late 1990s with the emergence

of new nuclear-weapon States. Today the number of nuclear-weapon States is almost double what it was in 1968, when the NPT was adopted. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, military actions and nuclear threats aimed at overthrowing sovereign States by force have become more blatant.

The country that was the first to manufacture and use nuclear weapons, thereby committing atrocities involving the killing many civilians, is still sitting on the world's largest number of nuclear weapons, has speeded up its modernization of those weapons and continues to resort to anachronistic, old-fashioned power politics. The so-called ideal of a nuclear-free world it has put forth has already been exposed as nothing but deceptive hypocrisy, designed to cover up the modernization of its nuclear weapons. The move to modernize nuclear weapons and deploy missile defence systems spanning the globe, pursued by the number-one nuclear Power without regard for the concerns of the international community, affects the interests of other nuclear-weapon States and has had serious long-term consequences for world peace and security.

The pivot to Asia is a new global strategy of the United States aimed at squeezing Asia, particularly North-East Asia, from every side and ultimately taking control of it. In order to pursue the new strategy, new missile defence systems are being introduced into Asia, more than 60 per cent of United States naval power has been concentrated in the region and its global missile strike capabilities are being rapidly strengthened. Comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament, and the removal of this ongoing threat to world peace and security, will be possible only when the number-one nuclear Power abandons its new strategy, based on a nuclear-weapon doctrine and global missile defence systems, and takes practical action to lead nuclear disarmament.

The Korean peninsula is a dangerous powder keg where the number-one nuclear-weapon State and the youngest of those States confront each other fiercely in a state of war. The Korean peninsula is now the poster child for the consequences arising from a nuclear-weapon State's breaking of its pledge to non-nuclear-weapon States at the time of the adoption of the NPT.

I would now like to draw the particular attention of the South Korean delegation to the following points.

Instead of providing security assurances to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which acceded to NPT in 1985, the United States has continued to intensify its nuclear threat. That nuclear threat, aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is not potential or abstract but practical and physical. Strategic nuclear bombers fly non-stop from the United States mainland or from Guam to the Korean peninsula to stage drills of dropping nuclear bombs several times each year. Aircraft carriers and submarines loaded with nuclear missiles constantly enter the waters around the Korean peninsula to take part in nuclear war exercises aimed at occupying Pyongyang.

The cruel nuclear threat and blackmail of the State that has been number one in nuclear arms for more than half a century, and its hostile policies, has compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to possess nuclear weapons, and the ever-increasing United States nuclear threat has left us with no choice but to bolster our deterrent capabilities in order to cope with it. Our nuclear forces are the life and soul of our nation and can be neither given up nor exchanged at any price as long as the nuclear threat to us persists. South Korea must understand this. Absurd actions and clashes result because it makes no attempt to understand it correctly. I urge South Korea to refrain from actions and attacks that bring disgrace on the Korean nation. The era when the number-one nuclear Power posed a unilateral nuclear threat to the world has gone forever, and military threats cannot solve our problems.

The joint military exercises being staged across South Korea this year, which started on 2 March and will last until the end of April, are unusually provocative and therefore particularly likely to spark a war. They are highly dangerous nuclear war drills for an invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since they are designed to swiftly introduce and deploy forward United States forces of aggression on the Korean peninsula, mounting a surprise pre-emptive attack in which combined forces remove the country's headquarters and occupy Pyongyang. It should be particularly noted that these large-scale exercises began in the wake of President Obama's openly stating, on 22 January, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be toppled.

South Korea has taken a position welcoming this through its own practical actions. South Korea immediately acts, willingly or not, when the superpower says something, and it is South Korea that sneezes when the superpower catches a cold. The insistence by the United States that these military

exercises are defensive in nature is a cover for its move to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and its argument that they are conducted annually is a smokescreen to conceal its preparations for a surprise invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The character and target of these war exercises clearly show the extent to which the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has reached a stage of real belligerent action. The war exercises conducted by the United States in South Korea constitute open infringement of the sovereignty and dignity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a grave military provocation. It is our army's position that if a single shell should drop anywhere where the Democratic People's Republic of Korea exercises sovereignty, it will immediately take action to oppose it.

It is not that the increasingly blatant military moves of the United States on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity target only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The real intention of the expanded United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is to lay siege to North-East Asia on a vast scale and bring the region under its high-handed and arbitrary control. To that end, the United States continues to intentionally exacerbate the situation on the Korean peninsula and push it to the brink of war. It is sophistry typical only of the United States to insist that military provocations staged on other countries' lands are annual, or defensive, and to denounce legal countermeasures taken in self-defence of one's own territory as provocative or threatening.

The UNDC, and the United Nations disarmament machinery in general, today faces serious challenges that need to be urgently addressed. The grave reality on the Korean peninsula should by itself be enough to show how serious these challenges are for the international community in its efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. It also reveals its cause. My delegation wishes to draw the Commission's special attention to the encroachment upon the sovereignty of States and the destruction of their internal arrangements through open nuclear threat, exercises, sanctions, blockades and so on.

Comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament is the overriding priority, as has been consistently expressed as a principled position by the Non-Aligned Movement. In order to achieve comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament, the country with the largest number of nuclear weapons should take the lead. That country has a special responsibility, and our progress in disarmament deliberations in general will depend upon the political will of that country.

If South Korea really wants to see a world without nuclear weapons it must demand the country with the special responsibility for global nuclear disarmament to change its policy and take the lead in the disarmament process. If South Korea can do this, it will mean that it can abandon its humiliating and shameful foreign policy and behaviour and contribute to the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole. It will also ensure durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

My delegation hopes that the UNDC will be able to commence substantial deliberations leading to a breakthrough in the field of nuclear disarmament this year on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Emvula (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for its 2015 substantive session. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections, Mr. Chair, and express appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his efforts during his tenure as Chair of the UNDC at its 2014 substantive session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is essential to strengthening international peace and security. In that context, we wish to stress that nuclear disarmament should remain the highest priority on the agenda of the UNDC.

Namibia strongly believes that resolution 69/58, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", is an appropriate outline for pursuing the objective of nuclear disarmament. We are confident that the resolution will enable the international community to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. However, that can happen only if there is political will to do so. To that end, we wish to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal,

unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Improving or modernizing existing nuclear weapons, including developing new types of nuclear weapons, contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament. Such activities are also in contradiction with the commitments already undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States.

Namibia remains a committed signatory to the Pelindaba Treaty, the instrument that provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those destructive weapons there, which is currently a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Like many other African States parties to the Treaty, Namibia urges the remaining States, particularly those mentioned in Protocol III, to take all the necessary measures to ensure its immediate ratification.

In the same vein, Namibia supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and expresses concern over the fact that commitments and obligations set forth in the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, have not been implemented. We join those who are calling for the full implementation of the Action Plan with respect to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Last but not least, we wish to highlight that multilateral disarmament negotiations will achieve tangible results only if there is genuine and sincere political will to support the process.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I wish to reiterate our full support for you, the Bureau and the work of the UNDC.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as the other members of the Bureau. I would like to express at the outset the full support of my delegation for your efforts.

(*spoke in English*)

Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Ecuador (see A/CN.10/PV.348) on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We can all agree that the multilateral disarmament architecture plays a crucial role in fostering dialogue and building confidence among States, thus contributing to the promotion of peace and security. At the same time, it should be recognized that the international community is not making the best use of the tools and opportunities offered by the existing machinery. The UNDC's potential has not been fulfilled in the last few years. We need to take better advantage of the universal membership of the Commission and explore more deeply the fact that it is not bound by a narrow thematic agenda.

The current global security situation is certainly complex, yet we have been able to agree on specific issues and adopt recommendations even during critical times, such as the Cold War. To name only a few important outcomes of past UNDC sessions, I would underscore the principles agreed to in 1988 on verification, which is a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty, the guidelines for international arms transfers of 1996 and the guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones of 1999. The latter has been of important political value to the development of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including with regard to the expected establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

In our opinion, the main obstacles to further progress in the UNDC is the lack of political will rather than procedural issues, as has been claimed by some. However, we are mindful of the fact that procedural aspects, particularly the setting of the agenda, need to be examined with special attention in order to enable meaningful deliberations. In that context, we wish to highlight that resolution 69/77 recommends that the UNDC agenda provide for focused deliberations and keep in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item.

Let me turn to our agenda for this session. With regard to the first item, "Achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation", I wish to reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons must be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner,

according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines. Brazil believes that the Commission could focus its deliberations on three important aspects pertaining to nuclear disarmament — transparency, irreversibility and verification. Discussions on verification could build upon, inter alia, the principles agreed by the UNDC in 1988.

Moreover, we reiterate our support for the idea that the UNDC could debate principles and elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. It is our firm view that those negotiations should take place within the existing multilateral system, either at the Conference on Disarmament or, if that is not viable, at the General Assembly. The high-level conference established by resolution 68/32, which will take place no later than 2018, will be an important element in that process.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humankind. Those weapons increase tensions in all regions of the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation between States. The limited reductions made thus far are, unfortunately, offset by the continued modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals. As the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons emphasized, nuclear weapons have long-lasting, devastating, and indiscriminate effects that affect civilians foremost, which makes them incompatible with international law and international humanitarian law. Their elimination is therefore a moral imperative as well as a legal obligation.

Brazil participates on a regular basis in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Programme of Action to Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. Furthermore, Brazil has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, currently in the process of ratification. Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also of relevance. Brazil and our neighbours in South America are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency in defence policies, including information on military expenditures and conventional arms.

While recognizing the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects pertaining to the field of conventional weapons that could be dealt by the UNDC. Brazil favours the consideration of a third agenda item, which could be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The inclusion of a third agenda item should not distract efforts towards advancing the other two items, nor should it serve the purpose of creating artificial linkages between different issues. Each topic must be considered on its own merits.

Finally, we sincerely expect that the UNDC will be able to agree on substantive recommendations in the current triennial cycle. More broadly, it is our hope that the debates held in this forum will create positive momentum towards the United Nations disarmament structure as a whole, including the upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to take place later this month.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its substantive session this year. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to the Chairs of the Working Groups. We wish all of them every success as they conduct their work and assure them the cooperation of the Cuban delegation.

The Cuban delegation fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the delegation of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (see A/CN.10/PV.348). We would also like to make some additional comments in our national capacity.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations. The Commission enables us to hold in-depth discussions on specific issues relating to disarmament and to produce concrete recommendations in that field.

Cuba belongs to a region where leaders during the second Summit of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States proclaimed that Latin America and the Caribbean to be a zone of peace. That decision constitutes a historic milestone of which we are very proud. In that context, Cuba rejects the arbitrary and aggressive executive order issued by the President of the United States against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which qualified that country

as a threat to national security. It is inconceivable that a country of solidarity, such as Venezuela, which has never invaded or attacked any other country and contributes in a substantial and altruistic way to the energy security and economic stability of a significant number of countries on the continent, could represent a threat to the security of the most powerful country of all time. The seriousness of that executive action has served as an alert for the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, which, in the context of declaring a zone of peace, repudiated any attack against them; they have had sufficient experience with imperial interventions in their history.

Nothing can justify the existence of more than 17,265 nuclear weapons. To provide for the possibility of using them is at a very minimum an irresponsible attitude. Today we know with certainty that the mushroom cloud would provoke a genocide much greater than that responsible for the mourning and suffering of thousands of Japanese families. The very broad international support for nuclear disarmament was reiterated on 26 September 2014 when, for the first time, we held the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. By a broad majority, the General Assembly called for the urgent initiation of negotiations for the speedy general conclusion of a convention on nuclear weapons, which would provide for their prohibition and total destruction.

It is urgent to move quickly towards the full implementation by the nuclear-weapons States of their commitments to achieve the priority goal of nuclear disarmament and the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons with initiatives that are irreversible, transparent and verifiable. Cuba expresses its opposition to the improvement and modernization of existing nuclear weapons and to the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligations of nuclear disarmament. We also oppose any kind of nuclear testing, including those carried out by supercomputers or other sophisticated non-explosive methods. My country reiterates the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies.

Cuba demands an end to the political manipulation surrounding the issue of non-proliferation, based on double standards and the existence of a club of the privileged who persist in refining their nuclear weapons, while attempting to question the inalienable right of the peoples of the countries of the South to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Cuba demands that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their commitments under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and immediately implement the 13 practical measures agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to achieve nuclear disarmament and implement the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop and research production and peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination, under articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. Moreover, we reaffirm the commitment of every party to the Treaty to facilitate participation in exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information related to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Cuba regrets the failure to agree on the convening of an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and reiterates that the holding of that conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Besides being an important contribution to the goal of nuclear disarmament, the establishment of such a zone would mark a momentous step forward in the Middle East peace process. Cuba urges the convening of the conference without further delay, in accordance with the agreements made by the States parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

On the subject of practical measures to promote confidence in the area of conventional weapons, Cuba believes that such voluntary measures are a way to strengthen international peace and security, and should therefore be adopted in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the specific security concerns of States. Cuba recognizes the contribution of confidence-building measures in disarmament and arms control, but reiterates that they alone are no alternative to disarmament.

Cuba is prepared to continue actively working to achieve concrete results in the work of this important Commission. We regret the lack of consensus on an agenda focused on more specific issues, which would have made a much greater contribution to recommendations. A discussion on a broad nuclear disarmament convention would, we feel, promote

global efforts aimed at liberating current and future generations from the threat of nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I reiterate our willingness to contribute to the success of our task. It is our hope that the Disarmament Commission will, at the end of this new cycle, be able to make concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. Riecken (Austria): Following the excellent chairmanships by Peru, Malta and Croatia, the United Nations Disarmament Commission is honoured to be chaired by you, Sir, for this first part of the triennial cycle. After more than 15 years of deadlock, we hope that this session will be able to build on the progress made in other forums to achieve concrete results and live up to the UNDC mandate set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), by agreeing on recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

In that context, we support a more focused agenda and efforts to enhance the functioning of the Commission. We also support the proposal to invite the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other relevant disarmament experts to present their views and prepare background papers on the agenda items, as provided for in resolution 61/98.

Austria remains fully committed to substantive progress in all the relevant disarmament forums, and especially in the General Assembly, under Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations. This year a particular focus will be on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with the Review Conference following on the heels of this UNDC session.

As all of those present may know, Austria hosted the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December 2014, in which delegations representing 158 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society organizations and academia participated. The Vienna Conference built upon the facts-based discussions at the first and second Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico, respectively, and contributed to a deeper understanding of the consequences and the actual risks posed by nuclear weapons. It addressed the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, including effects on human health, the environment, agriculture and food security, migration and the economy, as well as the risks and likelihood of the authorized or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, international response capabilities and the applicable normative framework.

The Chair's summary — although it was not a negotiated outcome document — drew eight key and irrefutable conclusions from the process with respect to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the risks associated with the existence of those weapons and the legal and moral dimension of that weaponry. It is our view that the conclusions constitute a powerful set of arguments that should lead to an urgent and profound change in the nuclear-weapons debate and in the equation on the security dimension of nuclear weapons that still prevails in the States possessing nuclear weapons and their allies.

For our part, we have issued a national pledge that includes the inescapable conclusions that Austria is convinced need to be drawn from the humanitarian arguments. Austria has therefore committed, first, to presenting the facts-based discussions, findings and compelling evidence of the Vienna Conference in all the relevant forums, in particular the NPT Review Conference of 2015 and under the United Nations framework, as they should be at the centre of all deliberations, obligations and commitments regarding nuclear disarmament. Secondly, Austria calls on all States parties to the NPT to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap in the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, Austria pledges to cooperate with all the relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, in the light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

In addition, Austria has invited all interested States to associate themselves with the Austrian Pledge, in order to further strengthen the humanitarian arguments and findings in advance of the upcoming NPT Review Conference and to underscore the expectation of the international community with respect to credible and urgent progress in that field. We are thankful for the great level of support and interest we have received so far and look forward to further cooperation with all interested stakeholders on this important issue.

Austria fully acknowledges the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as reflected in article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferaton

of Nuclear Weapons. Austrian constitutional law, however, prohibits not only nuclear weapons but also facilities designed to obtain energy through nuclear fission. That is also reaffirmed by the Government's commitment to our anti-nuclear-power State policy, taking into account the principle of a free choice in energy mix. That paramount principle was reconfirmed in resolution 66/288, which endorses the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development while recognizing that the activities of countries in broader energy-related matters are of great importance and are prioritized according to their specific challenges, capacities and circumstances, including their energy mix.

Against that backdrop, it is evident that any formulation that might be construed as promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for power generation in a generalized manner would be inconsistent with the aforementioned outcome reached, at the highest political level. Moreover, as my delegation repeatedly stressed during the previoius triennial cycle, any discussions on that topic are to be conducted in the relevant forums, as set out by the General Assembly, notably in its resolution 1145 (XII), pertaining to the relationship between the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the area of conventional weapons we value the contribution that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons can make to the maintenance and enhancement of regional and international peace and security. The report by the Working Group Chair in 2014 was therefore welcome progress, even though the United Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to agree to forward it to the General Assembly. For the coming cycle, we would advocate for consideration of explosive weapons and their devastating effects on civilian populations.

We warmly welcome the entry into force, on 24 December 2014, of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty. We anticipate that it will make a crucial contribution to peace and security, development and human rights. We are confident that the first Conference of States Parties, to be held in Mexico City in August, will be able to establish the necessary rules and structures to enable us to make further progress towards universalization.

Lastly, let me underline the importance that Austria attaches to the conventions prohibiting anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

In conclusion, let me express once more my hope that the Commission can overcome its deadlock and that it will achieve concrete progress in this cycle and issue recommendations, as tasked through its mandate. We encourage the Chair to continue to seek ways to improve working methods and enable more constructive and focused deliberations.

Ms. Telford (United Kingdom): I would like, at the outset, to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming the Chair and to assure you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom adds its support to those States here today reaffirming their commitments to the United Nations disarmament machinery and their willingness to seek to revitalize and reinvigorate the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We particularly welcome calls to reform the UNDC and support efforts to look at its working methods. We remain determined to work with our partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, to make progress on nuclear disarmament, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons States and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world in which countries with nuclear weapons will be able to relinquish them.

The United Kingdom has a strong record of fulfilling our nuclear disarmament commitments and meeting our obligations as party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We made the commitment in our 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review to reduce the number of deployed warheads on each of our Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines to 40, the number of operational submarines on each submarine to 8, and the total number of operational warheads to no more than 120. On 20 January 2015, we announced in the United Kingdom Parliament that we had met that commitment. We are continuing to work towards achieving a reduction in the size of our overall nuclear weapons stockpile to no more than 180 by the mid 2020s. The United Kingdom has long been clear that we will retain only a minimum credible nuclear deterrent and that we would consider using our nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including in defence of our NATO allies.

In February, we hosted the London P-5 conference, the sixth meeting since the P-5 first met to consider issues including nuclear disarmament. One of the reasons the

United Kingdom initiated the P-5 conferences back in 2009 was our strong desire to work together with the other nuclear weapons States on transparency and confidence-building measures. In London, the P-5 discussed how to make progress on all three pillars of the NPT, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For the first time, we invited representatives from non-nuclear weapons States to one of our meetings. We also held an outreach event to provide civil society groups an opportunity to engage directly with the P-5. At the end of the conference, the P-5 issued a joint statement that set out the progress made in increased transparency and cooperative work, including a glossary of nuclear terms, as well as our shared resolve to tackle non-proliferation issues. We also discussed the sensitive issue of verification of nuclear disarmament, one of the more challenging hurdles we will have to overcome as we seek to build a world without nuclear weapons.

Working with Norway and the United States, the United Kingdom has committed significant effort and resources to the question of verification, and our ground-breaking work with Norway has shown that verification is neither easy nor quick. Whether the issue is instilling trust in inspectors or ensuring that monitoring equipment provides accurate readings, there are still questions to answer. Doing this without revealing sensitive information or technology is not easy, and we will continue to work to address those issues. In that regard, we welcome the launch of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification by the United States.

The UNDC session this year will be followed by the NPT Review Conference. Reaching an agreement there will be challenging, but we remain confident that consensus can be achieved, and the NPT strengthened. Consensus proved possible in 2010, and States agreed an Action Plan that set a framework for balanced progress across all three pillars. That was a real achievement, and we hope that the Review Conference will confirm its continued relevance.

Turning now to conventional weapons, we warmly welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on Christmas Eve 2014. That was the culmination of many years of hard work. The continuing momentum behind the Treaty is clear from the pace of ratification. There are now 62 States party and 130 signatures to the ATT. We welcome all those countries that have ratified and we encourage all other States to accede to the Treaty as soon as they are able. We believe that the Treaty has the potential to change the lives of those most affected by the illicit trade in arms, and the United Kingdom is very proud to have been one of the leading advocates of the ATT since the beginning.

This year we look forward to a successful first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty. We hope that that will set the Treaty on a successful and stable footing for the future. Of course, the future success of the ATT depends largely upon its universalization and robust implementation. The United Kingdom continues to work to support other States in acceding to and implementing the ATT. This year the United Kingdom has funded projects in support of the ATT and export controls with a truly global reach. That has included a successful conference on ATT implementation, legal and legislative assistance to Asian and Latin American countries and implementation assistance to African States.

The United Kingdom believes that the illicit proliferation of conventional arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, is of deep concern. Small arms and light weapons are by far the single biggest contributor to conflict, violence and crime. We, the international community, have a responsibility to combat and eradicate the threats posed by those weapons of daily destruction. Nowhere is the problem felt more than in Libya, where the violence caused by small arms and light weapons is fuelling instability and insecurity, killing thousands. The vast unsecured stockpiles of conventional arms and ammunition, as well as new inflows, pose a grave threat to peace, stability and security not just in Libya, but also in the wider region. Although work to assist our Libyan colleagues has largely been put on hold due to insecurity on the ground, Member States should remain ready to react quickly and collaboratively if the situation improves.

The forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery — the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee — are as relevant today as when they were established. They are mutually reinforcing. We believe that reinvigorating any one of the bodies will have a positive effect on the others. Last year saw a round of valuable discussions held at the Conference on Disarmament, which we hope to build on this year. We should also build on those discussions here at the UNDC.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom looks forward to 2015 being the start of a successful cycle for the UNDC.

Ms. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua would like to congratulate you on your election, Sir, and to wish you every success in your stewardship. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Iran and Ecuador on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

We support the work and efforts of the Disarmament Commission, which should maintain its relevance as an in-depth deliberative body on disarmament issues with the purpose of making concrete recommendations in that area, as part of the multilateral mechanism of the United Nations.

Nicaragua proudly welcomed the historic formal proclamation, on 29 January 2014, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, with the aim of ending the use or threat of use of force in our region forever, and including the firm commitment of the States of the region to making nuclear disarmament a priority. However, the President of the United States of America recently made an unacceptable statement, prejudicial to sovereignty and international law, calling the brotherly people and Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela a threat to his country's national security. It is incredible that he should accuse the supportive Government of Venezuela, one of the hopes of the world and a promoter of peace and integration, of being a threat to any country, let alone his own, since, as our President, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, has pointed out, even taken all together the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean do not represent a threat to the powerful North American Government. Only last week, on 1 April, we celebrated a day of solidarity with Venezuela at which messages were read from CELAC, the Union of South American Nations, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement, the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, rejecting that executive order and demanding its retraction.

Nicaragua has informed the international community of its belief in the importance of working towards the goal of total and complete disarmament, which includes not only nuclear weapons but other conventional weapons of mass destruction whose use contravenes the fundamental principles of general international and international human-rights law. In that regard, we welcomed the proclamation of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, an initiative of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, with which our nations achieved their aim of stepping up their call to States to begin negotiations on a convention that would outline a specific schedule for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear arms. The high-level international conference to be held on nuclear disarmament in 2018 would be the ideal platform for proposing such a schedule.

Concerning nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Nicaragua, as a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is an advocate for the adoption, evaluation and study of resolutions and declarations on the subject, with the goal of making progress in limiting the arms race and pursuing measures leading to complete elimination of nuclear weapons under a transparent and effective system of international control. We reiterate that bringing an end to all test explosions of nuclear weapons is the most effective route to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The terrible consequences for human beings and the environment of the 2,000 nuclear tests that have been conducted since 1945 continue to be felt by people in many parts of the world.

Nicaragua respects the inalienable right of all States to research, produce and peacefully use nuclear power without discrimination, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The international community requires concrete action, and above all it requires that nuclear-weapon States immediately comply with their obligations under article VI of the NPT, as well as the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed on in 2000 and the Action Plan for nuclear disarmament adopted in 2010. We reaffirm our desire to see the negotiation and conclusion of a binding universal legal instrument, with unconditional security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States, with the goal of achieving complete elimination of such weapons, regardless of their type or geographical location. This takes into account the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which states that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Nicaragua, as part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Tlatelolco Declaration, firmly believes that the establishment of such zones can strengthen the non-proliferation regime, and thus international peace and security, making as it does an important contribution to the nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we regret the failure to agree on the holding of an international conference in 2012 for establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We reiterate that holding that conference represents an important and integral part of the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We therefore urge the parties to schedule a conference as soon as possible. We support efforts to make humanitarian concerns a priority at the forefront of the discussion of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we welcome the holding of three International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and strongly support their call for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Concerning practical measures to promote confidence in the field of conventional arms, we welcome those that contribute to international peace and security. They should be comply strictly with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect the specific concerns and security of States, and they should not be seen as an alternative to disarmament.

My country is committed to preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trafficking in arms and has taken measures to fulfil that commitment. In Nicaragua, aware of our commitments to peace for our people and to combating and preventing the illegal arms trade, we have incorporated the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument into our national legislation through Act No. 510, our law controlling and regulating firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. We have thereby launched a phase that includes a rigorous, tough plan for controlling and registering firearms in civilian hands, as well as for decommissioning weapons of war.

We would like to congratulate Belize on its recent accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and at the same time to welcome the establishment of Central America as a zone free of cluster munitions, announced at the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held last year. Our country is also proud to be part of the global leadership in the fight against anti-personnel mines, with our successful implementation of our national de-mining programme, whereby in 2010 we were able to declare Nicaragua, and with it the whole of Central America, the world's first subregion free of mines. We emphasize the importance of cooperation in mine clearance and assistance to victims and hope these recent successes will continue in the future.

While we have discussed the deadlock in the United Nations disarmament machinery a great deal, we have been unable to solve the real problem, which is the absence among some States of the political will needed to make real progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament. Those are the complex conditions under which we work in the Commission and continue to try to build a peaceful world. It is never too late if we have the will to change things.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your position as Chair of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups on their elections, and to assure the Commission of South Africa's full support.

South Africa wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy remain at the core of our efforts to find lasting solutions to the challenges that we face in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. This is why we believe it is important that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as the sole deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament machinery, agree to a set of concrete recommendations on its two agenda items in this substantive session at the commencement of the current three-year cycle. Failure to do so would only serve to further undermine the multilateral disarmament machinery, thereby adversely affecting international peace and security.

My delegation would agree with the words of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, at our opening session in which she said,

> "The Commission has an integral role to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its development of guidelines and recommendations has the potential to inspire future General Assembly resolutions, while also preparing the ground for new multilateral treaties. Fulfilling this potential, however, will require the Commission to work actively to seek compromises that will expand our common ground." (*A/CN.10/PV.344, p. 2*)

South Africa reiterates NAM's deep concern over the lack of progress in implementing nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, and echoes the calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, weapons and their delivery systems in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal undertaking that they provided in 2000 and further reiterated in the Final Documents of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. As far as our agenda for this substantive session is concerned, we regret that the initially proposed agenda item for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, including elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, has been omitted.

With regard to our conventional arms agenda item on practical confidence-building measures, we came close last year to the adoption of recommendations on this issue. It is our hope that the Commission will be able to build on those draft recommendations in order to make progress on them this year. As a relatively new State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, we believe that this convention has reinvigorated the debate on conventional arms control. The Treaty will also ensure that its States parties will be required to take a number of concrete measures at their respective national levels, thereby further enhancing practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

In conclusion, the Disarmament Commission has faced the challenge of not being able to make any progress for several years now. We hope that all delegations will be able to display the necessary political will so that real progress may be made in this session.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Allow me, Sir, to express my congratulations to you on assuming the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for its 2015 substantive session. My delegation is confident that under your able guidance we will proactively move forward in our work and fulfil the Commission's mandate.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his stewardship and tireless efforts during last year's session. In the same vein, I would like to thank Ms. Angela Kane, express our appreciation for her leadership and the work she has done as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

In this light, my delegation wishes to congratulate Mr. Kim Won-soo on the assumption of his duties as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We wish him great success as he takes up his new duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

The importance of the UNDC is unquestionable. It is the main subsidiary body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters. As the sole deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral machinery, it allows for in-depth discussions on specific issues of disarmament, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Regrettably, since 1999 we have been unable to submit any such recommendations, and thus have not fulfilled the mandate of the Commission. Although promising, the last session fell short of delivering recommendations to the General Assembly. It is our collective responsibility to overcome the impasse that has plagued the UNDC since the turn of the century. It is up to us, the States Members of the United Nations, to come together and revitalize this Commission.

As the UNDC enters a new three-year cycle, my delegation sincerely hopes that this time we will be able to fulfil the Disarmament Commission's mandate and provide the General Assembly with concrete recommendations on disarmament issues. Nevertheless, in order to achieve such a result, all Member States should show the necessary political will to reach agreement on recommendations. We urge all Member States to display increased political will, flexibility and cooperation during this new cycle.

The Royal Government of Cambodia reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament and emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their aspects are essential to strengthening international peace and security and to promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in the nuclear-weapon States' fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations. Moreover, in view of the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for consideration of disarmament issues, non-proliferation agreements should be addressed through inclusive, open and non-discriminatory processes and should not impose restrictions on access to the nuclear technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes needed by developing countries.

While considering that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone framework for addressing nuclear weapons, my Government welcomes the positive outcomes of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2014. My delegation looks forward to the convening of the 2015 Review Conference, scheduled to take place at the end of this month. It is important that we evaluate the results of the implementation of the NPT over the last five years and move forward in its implementation during the next five years.

I would again like to underscore the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and its mandate. My delegation stands ready to work constructively with other States Members of the United Nations to achieve success in the present three-year cycle of the UNDC. We wish you, Mr. Chair, every success in your work and are confident that, under your able guidance, we can achieve positive results as we strive to make progress on the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.